MEN OF THE COLD WAR:
WARRIOR ETHOS AND DOMESTICITY IN 1950S AMERICA

By

JOHN J. SMITH

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I thank all my teachers past and present for the many years of direction, encouragement, and enlightenment they gave me. I owe the United States Army a debt of gratitude for decades of opportunity. To my wife, Julie, and my sons, Alexander and Samuel, I give my love and express my appreciation for all their patience and support as well as giving purpose to everything I do.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iii

ABSTRACT v

INTRODUCTION:
THE ROOTS OF COLD WAR MASCULINE ANXIETY 1

CHAPTERS

1 ATOMIC BOMBS AND NUCLEAR FAMILIES: MASCULINITY, DOMESTIC CONTAINMENT, AND THE KOREAN WAR..... 22

2 A FAMILY OF MEN: STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND AND THE NEW DOMESTIC MALE..... 52

3 "OUR WEAPONS ARE USELESS!": MALE ANXIETY IN SCIENCE FICTION FILMS OF THE COLD WAR..... 84

4 SAVIOR IN A SPACE SUIT: THE ASTRONAUT IN COLD WAR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE..... 120

BIBLIOGRAPHY 146

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH 170

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John J. Smith

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Typically, traditional histories of the United States consist of a series of narratives centered on significant male figures, usually military leaders or those with significant military backgrounds. Though this cultural focus on warrior males seems adequate for most Americans through the end of the Second World War, the advent of the Cold War brought this dependence upon traditional warrior models into question. The widespread dissolution of traditional familial bonds—occurring during a period when the nuclear family was touted as a bulwark against external aggression—the nascent civil rights and women's equality movements, along with major advancements in nuclear weapons and rocket technology, all call into question the validity and efficacy of the male warriors' dominant position in American society during the 1950s. A detailed examination of such disparate sources as war films, science fiction "B" movies, children's space literature, and popular magazines such as *Life* and *Collier's*—alongside traditional poetry and fiction—presents a fresh, unique understanding of gender roles

and social expectations in mid-Twentieth Century America. Focusing on the years 1945 through 1963—the period from just after the close of World War II through the end of the Mercury space program—this dissertation helps to change the common perception that America's Cold War anxieties stemmed primarily from an external source: the threat of Communist expansion and aggression. In fact, what worried most white, heterosexual men in 1950s America was actually an internal threat to their traditional social status: pressure to abandon their warrior ethos in favor of domestication. Though the United States has made tremendous strides in recognizing the value of multiculturalism, such social advancements came only after much consternation by those who had to relinquish their traditional societal roles: the Warrior Males.

INTRODUCTION:
THE ROOTS OF COLD WAR MASCULINE ANXIETY

After the Second World War, the United States flourished in a post-war euphoria, yet many Americans, especially men, harbored a deep paranoia concerning their places in post-war society. Never before had Americans enjoyed such a booming economy while simultaneously sensing that their very existence was threatened by the same technological, political, and social circumstances that had created their material paradise. Although the shooting war had ended with an Allied victory, a Cold War had begun with new weapons such as atomic bombs and intercontinental missiles that left the ultimate outcome very much in question, and American men absolutely bewildered as to how to handle such an unstable condition.

In this new Atomic Age, many Americans bought tract houses in emerging suburban communities, and then mailed off for government-printed pamphlets on how to build fallout shelters in the basements of their Levittown homes. American children learned in school that their nation's democratic, market-based government was supposedly the most stable and secure the world had ever known, but then practiced "duck and cover" under their desks in case the Communist competition launched a sneak attack. American families cruised the new interstate highway system in their massive Detroit-built automobiles on their way to Disneyland, remembering that those same roads were designed to convey armed troops in case of ground invasion and to evacuate

civilian refugees from population centers in case of nuclear war. Though it seemed to be awash in luxury, Cold War American society was actually very fundamentally unstable

It seems that for every social advance realized or modern convenience invented, a new threat to post-war stability sprang up—a situation that caused a great deal of angst among the American men who had always seen the act of reducing threats and ensuring constancy as their special social duty. These threats to stability appear in many guises and on several levels during the years following World War II, all of which are interconnected and important to understanding the cumulative sense of dread that pervaded the male psyche—and practically all forms of literature—during the Cold War. One can identify at least four major areas where anxiety-producing instabilities contributed to American post-war masculine anxiety: unstable international boundaries and relationships, shifting gender relationships within American society, changing definitions of "masculine" and "feminine" identities and roles, and the composition and function of the traditional American nuclear family.

First, and perhaps most notably, the end of the Second World War and the resulting bisection of the world along geopolitical lines created extremely unstable international relationships. Soon after cessation of hostilities in 1945, many countries began to align themselves with either the Communist Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or the democratic United States, both those camps struggling to woo the few remaining non-aligned counties into their folds or to convert previously claimed states to their side of the conflict. Cold War literature is largely shaped by this ongoing international competition and punctuated by several important events that shook American confidence during the early post-war years, including the partitioning and

subsequent sharing of Germany and Berlin with the Soviet Union beginning in 1945; mainland China's fall to Communist forces in 1949; the inability to win a decisive military victory in Korea in 1950-53; the so-called "bomber gap" and "missile gap" (that were perhaps more political campaign issues than real dangers), made more poignant after Sputnik began beeping its way around the earth in 1957; and the advent of "brinkmanship" international diplomacy, which came to a boiling point during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

All these situations seemed to call for escalated military response, yet Cold War politics, very much concerned with the dangers of global nuclear war, prevented large-scale campaigns and so spawned disillusionment with American military prowess. For instance, the February 4, 1952, cover of *Life* magazine presented an article entitled "Our Planes and Why They Can't Drive Red MiGs from the Skies." In another issue of *Life*, this time from May 11, 1953, a five-page photo spread depicted American prisoners of war held captive by smiling North Korean soldiers (27-31). The expressions of defeat and humiliation on the faces of the POWs are heartbreaking. Americans wondered how its mighty military machine had become so impotent and why Cold War crises could not be decisively resolved through traditional methods of masculine, armed aggression as they had been in the Second World War.

Instead of total war, politicians in the United States had turned to the concept of "containment," the policy of constructing physical as well as intangible barriers between nations along lines of economic philosophy. First espoused by George F. Kennan, an American diplomat assigned to Moscow in the 1930s, it allowed no possibility of compromise or coexistence between capitalism and communism. He wrote in his

famous "long telegram" in February of 1947, "the two systems cannot even exist in the same world unless an economic cordon is put around one or the other of them" (qtd. in R. Schwartz *Reference Guide* 189). He further emphasizes this point in "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," an article he anonymously contributed to *Foreign Affairs* in July of 1946. Coining the term that would become central to American Cold War politics and culture, he insists that "the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant *containment* of Russian expansive tendencies" (670). As Kennan's advice became national policy, our strategic military aims shifted from defeating enemies to containing them.

While the Cold War often did erupt into conventional shooting wars in places such as Korea, Vietnam, Angola, Afghanistan, and a few other hot spots around the world, such "police actions" were never officially declared "wars." They were contained to relatively small geographical regions and thus the armies, navies, and air forces of the super- and near-superpowers had to be content with war games, training maneuvers, and routine patrols along relatively peaceful frontiers, though those frontiers often shifted and were redrawn with the political winds. Seldom did any confrontation—diplomatic or military—end with a decisive conclusion. Militaries merely contained hostilities within a certain area of conflict. The mighty American military forces, whose victories in 1945 were so celebrated, were themselves contained and restrained by new rules of cold warfare under the ubiquitous, threatening umbrella of global nuclear war and thus prevented from doing anything meaningful in solidifying international relationships during the Cold War.

Additionally, gone from the public's perspective were the traditional military heroes like Sergeant Audie Murphy or General George Patton, who fought conventional wars with machine guns and tanks. The new male role models were the scientist-inventor-intellectuals, the Werner van Brauns and J. Robert Oppenheimers, who produced high-technology cold war weaponry that was never used against an actual enemy in the field of battle. With the passing of the old male role models came the realization that the new heroes, being more cerebral than physical, could just as easily inspire young women as young men to positions of greatness. Literature produced from the end of the Second World War until the middle of the 1960s often illustrates the resultant mid-century male struggle to maintain traditional vestiges of warrior-based manliness during this protracted international conflict that was like war, but not war.

Second, boundaries between male and female and between public and private within United States society previously considered inviolate became blurred. Due to the unique nature of the Cold War, the previously disparate spheres of male-oriented military life external to the home and female-oriented civilian life centered in the home became fused into a likewise unique situation. Everyone living in the United States became a Cold Warrior to some extent, especially after the advent of intercontinental ballistic missiles and the proliferation of atomic and hydrogen bombs. Technological developments in warfare placed all Americans—and not just American servicemen—directly in harm's way. During the first half of the twentieth century, the Armed Forces (almost exclusively adult males) fought their conventional battles overseas. With the notable exception of Pearl Harbor, attacks on the United States during World War II were limited to a few torpedoed ships off the Florida coast and the occupation of a few

barren islands in the Aleutians. However, changes in weaponry during the second half of the twentieth century made real the threat of hostile action against American women and children in their own homes, thus calling into question the validity of that most male-oriented activity: making war in the Atomic Age. As nuclear weapons became too dangerous to use for anything but saber rattling and bargaining chips, America's military became contained by the awesome power of its own technology as well as its methods of competition.

Because of the dangers inherent in thermonuclear weapons, the Cold War was fought more through political posturing, demonstrations of technological prowess, and the ability to produce consumer goods than with traditional military might. The otherwise mundane process of buying an advertised product, such as a new car or television set, became a political act of support for capitalism and a blow against communism. Buying a new model of refrigerator before the old one stopped working, thus supporting America's market economy, became a passive act of war. Robert J. Corber, author of *Homosexuality in Cold War America* (1997) sees this "emergence and consolidation of a Fordist organization of production and consumption" as central to the post-war crisis of masculinity (5). He demonstrates that men were no longer expected to live independent from the domestic sphere nor expected to prove their masculinity in the public arena of the battlefield. Rather, the existence of low-cost mortgages obtained through the Veteran's Administration, easy consumer credit for luxury goods, and development of suburban shopping malls—along with burgeoning print and television advertisement industries—encouraged men to define themselves through the things they purchased and to take an active hand in decorating and furnishing the home, activities

previously reserved for women. Through social, corporate, and government promotions of mass consumption, Corber points out, the stereotypical Ward Cleaver and Ozzie Nelson version of the white, middle-class, heterosexual family man with suburban home, automobile, and television became hegemonic in American culture.

Clearly, American men were being defined by their possessions. For instance, in Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959)—a film that illustrates well the complexities of Cold War geopolitics, gender relationships, and consumerism—enemy agents mistake Madison Avenue executive Roger Thornhill (played by the unmistakably masculine-coded Cary Grant) for American spy George Kaplan simply because Thornhill inadvertently comes into possession of Kaplan's masculine-coding possessions: his convertible, his "gray flannel suit," his domicile, even his hair brush. As it turns out, Kaplan never really existed; American intelligence agents invented him as a decoy to distract the enemy from actual operatives. Here, the notion of defining oneself through one's material possessions is so strong that fictitious identities overpower actual identities merely due to a preponderance of material evidence.

Likewise, American armed forces took on this role of consumer, with potency defined not through actions, but by quantity and newness of manufactured war materiel. As with civilian consumers in the 1950s and their automobiles of ever-increasing comfort, power, and stylistic change, the process of developing, manufacturing, and purchasing a new weapon system—a bomber or a tank, for instance—became a paramount focus of the Pentagon during the Cold War. While this was certainly a less bloodthirsty way of waging war, it transformed fighting men (and they were nearly exclusively men during the Cold War) into feminized shoppers or even surrogate

mothers, further dissolving the boundaries between the feminine-coded domicile and the masculine-coded battlefield. Therefore, anyone could be a hero of the Cold War, regardless of gender, merely by stockpiling canned goods in a home fallout shelter or purchasing a new automobile or washing machine every two years. The arbitrary circumstance of being male was no longer a prerequisite to obtaining warrior-hero status in American society. The previously crystal-clear boundary between combatants and innocents was blurring, and along with it the very demarcation between "male" and "female," which brings us to the next, and perhaps the most fundamental, shift in Cold War America.

This third anxiety-producing boundary displacement occurs due to confusing and conflicting definitions of what mid-century Americans consider "masculine" identities and activities and what are considered "feminine." While traditional gender stereotypes no longer have the cultural weight they once had, previous generations held onto them as indisputable fact, so it is necessary to examine that point of view. Cold War attitudes about the origins and nature of gender identities generally ran along the psychological explanations of either Sigmund Freud or Carl Jung, the creators of twentieth-century psychoanalytic methods. To simplify, Freud maintains that anatomy alone determines gender while Jung holds to the existence of universal principles of masculine and feminine—the "animus" and "anima"—which are "irreducible cores of sexual identity" (Gilmore 21). According to both these schools of thought, refusal to accept one's sexual identity, as predetermined by one's genitalia or cultural heritage, often leads to deep psychological problems, which included homosexuality, oedipal complexes, fetishes, and over- and under-sex drives. Masculinity was considered to be the "normal" human

condition and femininity was regarded as a castrated or undeveloped masculinity. Though such blunt and rigid categorizations of human identity and sexuality are now largely dismissed, these theories shaped cultural mores for Americans in the 1950s. For example, Dr. Benjamin Spock was a devotee of Freud and his best-selling book *Baby and Child Care* had been influencing parents and children ever since 1946.

These sharply defined gender boundaries are further emphasized in other studies. In his 1990 book *Manhood in the Making*, anthropologist David D. Gilmore, after extensive field research among preindustrial agricultural and hunter-gather societies around the world, enumerates what he believes is a nearly universal set of expected social behaviors that distinguish "male" from "female." These behaviors interestingly coincide with popular American Cold War theories of gender. In the societies Gilmore examined, he found recurring sets of binary oppositions that neatly divided their members into easily distinguished "male" and "female" groups. These oppositional pairings include the custom that men occupy and operate in public places while women remain in private; that men are assertive and readily confront danger while women are acquiescent and shun dangerous situations; that men smoke tobacco and drink liquor while women abstain (65). Interestingly, these binary oppositions are evident in popular media such as television sit-coms in Cold War America. Perhaps their male audiences hoped that a return to these gender-defining oppositions would bring relief from gender-identity turmoil. Thus, American men's desire to preserve stereotypical barriers between what constitutes "masculine" and "feminine" is not really a longing to return to 1941, but actually a desire to return to an idealized preindustrial society of distinct gender identities based upon consensually agreed upon behaviors. Though since dismissed as

shallow stereotypes that objectify human nature and exclude millions of people who cannot or choose not to follow the scripted norms, acceptance of these engendered behaviors as "normal" makes it easy to categorize and pass judgment on people at a glance.

Since Freud and Jung, however, a more convincing model of gender identification has emerged. The above-mentioned binary oppositions, so attractive because of their simplistic "either-or" gender identifications, are now considered to be examples of gender performances. For example, as Steven Cohan points out in his examination of masculinity in American films of the 1950s, *Masked Men* (1997), many social critics now consider gender to be basically performative in nature: it is an assumed identity based upon generally accepted social norms and mores rather than upon physiology. Another proponent of the performative nature of modern genders is Judith Butler, who maintains that they are cultural masquerades that have replaced the previously accepted notion of biological determination of human sexuality. She states that since "gender consists of social meanings that sex assumes, then sex does not *accrue* social meanings as additive properties but, rather, *is replaced* by the social meanings it takes on" (*Bodies that Matter* 5). In other words, "feminine" or "masculine" appearances and behaviors are learned by witnessing similar performances by established gender role models in ritualized social settings or through formal instruction by consensually accepted mentors and media. After the prescribed inculcation period, one then proves membership in a gender group by continual demonstrations of gender-based knowledge, acting out the socially constructed and consensually accepted roles of either a woman or a man in an appropriate situation. Butler further points out that these

performances, being manifestations of artificial social constructs, must necessarily be repeated in order to "produce the appearance of substance" (*Gender Trouble* 43-4). To be classified as one gender or another, people must constantly reenact their learned gender roles. One is never once and finally a man or a woman.

However, these constructed gender identities have played important parts themselves in shaping modern culture. As Roger Horrocks outlines, in spite of their artificiality and the enormous energy needed to maintain them, gender performances have historically served a political function in that they establish a division of labor that supports patriarchies and instant identification of "normal" and "perverse" activities and appearances. They also have psychological import in structuring family groups and directing child rearing, especially in the cultural indoctrination of male children to identify with the father and escape the mother. Gender performances also have a symbolic function, embedded in cultural mythologies that instruct, warn, punish, and reward those who embrace or eschew the consensus (20). Throughout the Cold War, popular films, novels, pulp fiction, poetry, and even children's literature constantly depict these engendering performances to both present masculine anxieties resulting from slippage of sexual identifications and to offer proposed solutions to those anxieties.

The existence, persistence, and artificiality of socially constructed gender performances are now widely accepted concepts in gender studies. For instance, in her examination of gender relationships during the Vietnam War, Susan Jeffords defines "masculinity" as "the set of images, values, interests, and activities held important to a successful achievement of male adulthood in American cultures" (xii). This male adulthood was usually connected with the ritual of engaging in combat. Horrocks

describes consensually agreed upon versions of performatives as "collective fantasies," myths that ultimately prove ephemeral and artificial yet are often vehemently maintained as they "give substance and structure to a society's political, social, economic and cultural existence, and also help structure the individual's existence" (17). They are artificial and usually discriminatory, often romanticizing violence, misogyny, and homophobia as in the writings of popular "masculine" Cold War writers such as Ernest Hemingway, Norman Mailer, and Mickey Spillane. Nevertheless, examining these myths of masculinity helps us understand the composition of the Warrior Male figure in Cold War American literature and culture, as well as the anxieties produced when those myths gradually gave way to a very different reality.

The myth of Warrior Male is of paramount concern in this study, but the investigation of other masculine-coded behaviors is beneficial in determining both the characterizations and anxiety of Cold War American men. "Real" men have long been expected to perform as soldiers—demonstrating skill in wielding phallic weapons and containing their natural fears of injury and mortality—to defend "weaker" women and defenseless children on a wartime stage. However, the Cold War did not usually provide traditional male-dominated arenas for martial contest. It offered mainly passive, domesticated, often-feminized, non-war venues for performance of masculine roles. Ritualized duels, single combat between two men in front of witnesses, have been a part of Western culture since the sixteenth century (Mosse 15). But the mid-century "Organization Man" model made teamwork more important than personal heroics in defining masculine success. The stereotypical masculine vices such as heterosexual promiscuity, hard drinking, swearing, the handling of firearms and other weapons, and

gambling all gave way to feminine-coded standards of domesticated, monogamous, polite comportment.

One Cold War film that illustrates nearly all these masculine anxieties is William Wyler's *The Best Years of our Lives* (1946). Following the lives of three recently discharged World War II veterans, this picture succinctly demonstrates the sense of uselessness and confusion returning servicemen felt as they entered the socially fluid post-war world and discovered that the traditional Male Warrior performatives were no longer valid. Al Stephenson was an infantry platoon sergeant who, upon returning to his prewar job as a banker, learns that the homosocial bonds of soldierly brotherhood he embraced during the war lead to friction at his civilian job when he extends credit to a fellow veteran. Having taken up the masculine performative of heavy drinking with Army comrades, he discovers that his alcoholism is considered a vice in peacetime. Fred Derry once personified the macho World War II image of the gallant Air Corps flyer, having served as a bombardier aboard a long-range bomber. Returning home, however, the only work he can land is behind a soda fountain at a drug store. Additionally, he is prevented from performing his masculine-coded role as a satisfying heterosexual lover when his wife leaves him for another man when Derry trades in his snappy flyer's uniform for a soda jerk's white suit and paper hat. Homer Parrish is a sailor who lost both hands when his ship sank during the war. He returns home to his childhood sweetheart and though she and his mother pretend that his double amputation (a figurative castration) makes no difference to their wedding plans, his sense of impotence is obvious. His clumsily trying to shoot his favorite target rifle with his prosthetic hooks demonstrates that, although he was spared from death, he will never

again be as deft as he once was in wielding the phallus. These three men initially came home as war heroes—epitomizing the very essence of Warrior Male gender-defining performance—yet all soon found that they were not as adequate as they once had been and, even more importantly, post-war American society no longer valued traditional masculine performatives as it once had. "Last year, it was 'Kill Japs,'" laments Stephenson, "and this year, it's 'Make Money!'" Military training and experience, once held to be the ultimate masculine gender performances, amount to naught in the Cold War world of rapidly changing gender roles, domesticated family men, and consumer culture.

The fourth locus of Cold War masculine anxiety is the shifting boundaries within the nuclear family of post-war America. Many perceived that the stability of established gender roles was further diluted by the emergence of empowered women in post-war United States. With the bulk of able-bodied men serving in uniform, women stepped up to fill the traditionally male-gendered roles of factory worker, wage earner, and head of household. Returning World War II veterans were apprehensive about these newly enabled women whom they saw as being "too independent, undomestic, and unfeminine" (Breines 33). As a result, a common, underlying thread through much Cold War literature revolved around "an effort to ensure that women went home and stayed home after the war, a policy of containment" (Breines 33). From the end of the war through the mid-1960s an underlying, male distress over these empowered women is evident in the literature of the day, along with proposed solutions as to how to return society to its pre-war, masculine-dominated condition.

For example, in a series of articles that first ran in *Look* magazine in 1958 and were later collected in a volume entitled *The Decline of the American Male*, J. Robert Moskin states that "the American male is now dominated by the American female" and that "he is no longer the masculine, strong-minded man who pioneered the continent and built America's greatness" (3). He cites several statistics to back this claim, including the fact that there are 1.5 million more women than men in the United States, that one out of every three women is in the work force and will continue to hold more and more "authority-wielding executive jobs," that there will be over three million more women voters than men voters in the 1960 presidential election, and finally, that an increasing number of women were owning stocks than ever before (18).

However, Moskin fails to interpret these statistics. First, the gender imbalance in the overall population was due to male casualties during World War II and Korea. Second, he implies that working women were taking jobs away from men, but ignores the fact that in America's expanding post-war economy there were more jobs for everyone. Third, he hints that women who vote or hold stocks were somehow conspiring against men, yet fails to mention that presidential candidates and corporate executives were nearly exclusively men. Moskin is fanning the flames of male paranoia, using statistics to "prove" that perceived threats to masculine hegemony—the perceived dominant position of adult men and the subsequent subordination of women and children— were indeed substantial and perilous to the American way of life.

Breaking away from the Freudian concept of predetermined gender identity, Moskin agrees with the notion that being a man is just that, an act that must be learned, rehearsed, and repeatedly performed before a critical and judgmental audience in order

to prove one's manhood. The masculinity crisis of the 1950s, he believes, occurs in part because "a boy growing up today has little chance to observe his father in strictly masculine pursuits" (14). He goes on to propose that the transmission of these performative rituals is being interrupted by post-war social conditions in the United States, particularly the expanding influence of women. He quotes Dr. Milton J. E. Senn, the director of the Child Study Center at Yale, who adds, "Boys, to grow into masculine men, need to see what masculinity is like. They are thwarted if there is no male figure around and if the female takes over" (14). Whether the man in the family was busy at work, putting in overtime to pay for the many consumer goods thought to be necessary, or if he had been killed or disabled while in the military, the absence of fathers, or presence of weak-willed fathers, was contributing to what many called "momism," an over-reliance on an overbearing woman to raise male children.

As many saw post-war women undermining the potency of American men as patriarchal heads of their families, subsequent concerns also arose as to the definition and stability of the family itself. Elaine Tyler May points out that even as the American home and its stereotypical nuclear family of a male bread-winner, female homemaker, and multiple children was posited as a safe haven from the uncertainties of the postwar worlds, it was also vulnerable to many threats, both external and internal. The domesticated culture of the Cold War home, May explains, was ostensibly presented as being self-contained, self-sufficient, and proof against external threats, as illustrated by the short-lived but influential flurry of fallout shelter building in the 1950s and its resurgence during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. However, she shows that this notion actually resulted in movements towards materialism, consumerism, and

conformity—all of which produced quite the opposite effect of self-sufficiency. Thus, not only does Cold War literature reflect questions about masculine gender performance as head-of-household, it also opens debate on the sanctity of the nuclear family itself.

All four loci of Cold War boundary shifting—involving international geopolitics, internal American domestic issues, gender identities, and composition of the nuclear family—are evident in many novels, short stories, and poems from the 1950s and early 1960s, which therefore are the texts that might allow an examination and understanding of the complex masculine anxieties outlined above. In the first part of the twentieth century, such gender performances were transmitted through the usual methods: sons observed and then imitated their fathers or read of masculine-coded heroics in valorized text books and novels and then attempted to copy the actions of those historical and literary figures. But by mid-century, other media also arrived to help indoctrinate adolescents in the mythos of the Warrior Male. At the cinema, Westerns, detective film noir, and horror movies entertained while transmitting masculine performance codes to their audiences. Radio and television also contributed to the perceived consensus of what makes a "man," with the traditional "Warrior Male" usually depicted as the only acceptable role model for masculine behavior. Additionally, pulp magazines from the 1950s and early 1960s with such hypermasculine titles as *Male*, *Men*, *Action for Men*, *Stag*, *For Men Only*, *Man's World*, and *Man to Man* reveal a pervasive desire to maintain stereotypical gender identities through traditional but outdated performative guidelines. Close readings of these other sorts of texts reveal a richer and perhaps more accurate sampling of American concerns and attitudes over changing social boundaries and the associated male angst.

The first chapter of this dissertation focuses on events and texts revolving around what is often called "the forgotten war": Korea. Maybe due to its occurrence so close upon the heels of the Second World War or because it was deemed a "police action" rather than an actual declared war, Korea nevertheless provides a departure point for exploring the changing composition of the American nuclear family. For example, W. D. Snodgrass's collection of poetry in *Heart's Needle* (1959) examines the idea of the nuclear family and uses familial metaphors to describe the Korean War while at the same time using war metaphors to illustrate the breakup of the poet's own family. This chapter investigates how perceived definitions of gender, masculinity, and the nuclear family change during this time.

Traditional definitions of what constitutes "family" underwent tremendous changes during the post-war years, and Chapter 2 continues this examination of the Cold War nuclear family, focusing on a unique, metaphorical family: the Air Force bomber crew. There exists an entire subgenre of war films that has as its subject matter the crewmen of Army Air Corps, United States Air Force, and Strategic Air Command bombers—a category that has gone unexamined in the area of gender studies. These films reveal a curious dynamic among the men who were ostensibly lionized as guardians of traditional Male Warrior performatives, but actually created homosocial groups that more closely resemble the stereotypical nuclear family. An examination of what Michael Paris calls the SAC Trilogy of Cold War films—*Strategic Air Command* (1955), *Bombers B-52* (1957), and *A Gathering of Eagles* (1962)—alongside other texts, reveals that these plane crews formed unique bonds that were often in conflict with traditional masculine performatives and even replacements for the traditional

heterosexual nuclear family. As elucidated by scholars such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Judith Butler, these performances helped perpetuate the established, but failing, patriarchy through intense homosocial bonding that attempted to bring men together in close physical and emotional contact yet prohibit sexual intimacy among them. Championed as America's first line of defense during Cold War tension, the complex interpersonal dynamics of these bomber crews demonstrate that preservation of the traditional family structure was not necessarily a panacea for mid-century masculine anxiety, as exhibited in later films that parodied America's dependence upon strategic bombers (and the men who flew them), including *No Time for Sergeants* (1958) and Stanley Kubrick's seminal *Dr. Strangelove: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964).

The third chapter of this dissertation will demonstrate how American science fiction films of the 1950s were metaphors for the fears Warrior Males needed to express during the Cold War. As Horrocks points out, the fears that became monsters in those horror films can be identified as both fear of the opposite sex and as fear about one's own sexuality (99). By substituting mistrust of feminized atomic scientists and changing gender relationships for invaders from space, these films portrayed the "new" dangers that beset American men. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *The Thing From Another World* (both 1951) are just two of the films that depict a central concern in Cold War America: the possible failure of our technology, our Armed Forces, and our government to contain our enemies and thus the potency of previously accepted masculine performances. Making this threat even more dangerous was the idea that these ideological invaders were already among us and that they were infiltrating every facet of

American life in an attempt to subvert our very way of life. These films also offered solutions to the perceived crises of masculinity, solutions that gradually evolved as the decade progressed but remained largely dedicated to preserving the social hegemony of the Warrior Male.

Part fighter pilot, part physicist, and all around family man, the American astronauts of the Cold War Mercury and Gemini space programs were posited as a new type of American hero, but this concept was but another constructed, performative, gendered façade of masculinity. Since the arms race became increasingly dangerous with every technological advancement achieved during the Cold War, both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. turned their research and procurement efforts into a contest that helped avert nuclear war: the space race. In addition to literature and film designed to ignite adult imagination and support for this race, there was also a corpus of work created for children intended to instill in them the competitive spirit needed to dominate the Russians in the new arena of outer space. Chapter 4 will show that as the Cold War arms race evolved into a race for space, the competition included inculcating into American youth the virtue, importance, and promise of space exploration. For instance, Mae and Ira Freeman's *You Will Go to the Moon* helped introduce space flight in glowing terms to young people in 1959 and Gene Gurney's 1962 *Americans into Orbit* contributed to the cult of astronaut hero worship, the astronaut being the allegedly ideal amalgamation of warrior and scientist. Faced with irresistible technological and social changes, Warrior Male sought to maintain his dominant position in American society by at least superficially adjusting to the times but always with the goal of transmitting the notion of masculine hegemony to the next generation.

This dissertation, then, will examine selected texts produced during or pertaining to the early Cold War period in an attempt to demonstrate how they reflect a perceived crisis in American manhood wherein the validity of traditional Warrior Male performative roles was being challenged by technological developments in warfare, by the emergence of empowered women who were perceived as plotting to unseat men from their traditional places of power, and by social changes in the composition and function of the nuclear family. These shifting boundaries within the United States, between the "masculine" and the "feminine" and within the nuclear family form the roots of this mid-century anxiety. Prevented from demonstrating their worth in traditional arenas of masculine performance, the Warrior Male began to assume social functions that had previously been gender-coded in the literature as effeminate or for women only. By expanding the corpus of what can be considered war literature to include a more representative slice of Cold War life, and by considering gender studies alongside military history, I hope to present a new way of considering American men's familial, political, and social performative roles as they were exhibited in Cold War narratives of boundaries and containment, for these performances shaped not only interpersonal relationships but also almost every aspect of post-war American culture.

CHAPTER 1
ATOMIC BOMBS AND NUCLEAR FAMILIES: MASCULINITY, DOMESTIC CONTAINMENT, AND THE KOREAN WAR

If the roots of mid-twentieth century masculine anxiety originate in the shifting lines of gender identity and roles within the American nuclear family, then an apt illustration of such dissolution of boundaries within a domestic unit is present in the Korean War. At the end of World War II, as a means of dividing the Communist north from the Democratic south, the Allies drew a clear line of demarcation at the 38th parallel. However, this artificial boundary would soon be contested by those whom it was intended to define, just as postwar masculine identities would come under scrutiny as the efficacy and relevancy of the traditional Warrior Male role became questionable in the Atomic Age world.

Early in the morning on 24 June 1950, North Korean troops descended south across the 38th parallel and captured the South Korean capital of Seoul. By September, they had managed to push American and South Korean ground forces into a small defensive perimeter around the port city of Pusan at the extreme southern tip of the Korean peninsula. Eager to redeem themselves after many humiliating defeats and finally reinforced with large numbers of American draftees and mobilized reservists (mostly World War II veterans) and supplied with all the military hardware America's industrial might could produce, the combined armies of the U. S. and Republic of Korea managed to drive the Communist invaders back not only to the 38th Parallel, but north to

the Yalu River—the border between Korea and China—by November of 1950. However, just as an unusually harsh winter was setting in, tens of thousands of Chinese troops poured across the Yalu—a boundary that U. S. forces were not allowed to cross—and recaptured Seoul. Eventually, the fighting ground to a stalemated halt where it had begun, the 38th parallel. By the time an armistice was signed in the summer of 1953, over one million Americans had fought in that "police action," with about fifty-four thousand killed and nearly twice that number wounded (Ehrhart, "Soldier Poets" 1-2).

The geopolitical lines of containment failed to deter military aggression in Korea, and an examination of American poetry produced during the 1950s demonstrates that social lines of containment—drawn along traditional gender roles and performance expectations—likewise failed to prevent ambiguity and conflict in Cold War America as its citizens contemplated new concepts of masculinity, domesticity, and "the family." From among mid-century's ranks of reluctant soldiers would emerge a group of poets who question not only their own masculinities, but also the very concept of dividing the world into two discrete spheres of existence: the masculine public and the feminine private. Dubbed the "Confessional Poets," these men, notably W. D. Snodgrass and Robert Lowell, would father a movement in the 1950s that would be further developed by their female students and colleagues Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath in the 1960s. Poetry originally devised as a vehicle to express publicly the private conflicts of men "enfeebled by fatherhood," (Middlebrook 640), this genre would later be brought to its full flower by women, further demonstrating the blurring of gender roles that was beginning to be examined in the years after World War II.

As mentioned earlier, some of the most important changes brought about by the social and economic necessities of the Second World War were redefinitions of traditional gender roles and concepts of what exactly comprises "the family." As with any attempts to define complex social relationships, constructed lines of definition and containment are always to some degree porous, shifting, and often quite blurred. For example, though popular Cold War rhetoric often invokes the notion of the American family's strength as the primary bulwark against Communist aggression, the very substance—even existence—of the traditional "nuclear family" came into question. Elaine Tyler May points out in her book *Homeward Bound* that containment ideology—with the American home providing a defense against the insecurities of international Cold War nuclear diplomacy—creates a dilemma: the enormous social importance now placed on the private American home requires public surveillance to ensure that it complies with the political ideals it is meant to represent. As Deborah L. Nelson summarizes this quandary: "the security offered by the private home could only be assured by violating its privacy" (22). Especially in the context of the nuclear family of Cold War America, the boundary between what is private and what was public begins to blur, and thus the roles of the public-sphere Warrior Male and the private sphere of the Domestic Housewife begin to intersect and meld. Without a large-scale war to fight, men were expected to do more around the house in regards to child care, cleaning, and cooking. Women were encouraged to assume the additional task of stocking and maintaining the family's Cold War bomb shelter. So as the 1950s progressed, Americans—especially male Americans—faced the problem of how to maintain their Warrior Male status while engaged in very unmanly domestic activities.

This paradox is aptly illustrated in the works of the Confessional Poets and their unashamed, often shocking revelations of personal feelings. Two widely hailed volumes of poetry published in 1959, Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* and W.D. Snodgrass' *Heart's Needle*, paved the way for other poets of this genre, including John Berryman, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, and arguably Elizabeth Bishop. The pervasive angst over social relationships and disenchantment with existing constructs of gender roles are often cited as both the contextual and tonal sources of confessional poetry, self-deprecating—often guilt-ridden—verse demonstrating a very palatable sense of confusion and disillusionment with the post-war world.

Often explained away as merely a formal rejection of New Criticism, confessional poetry's primary value lies in its ability to demolish the barrier between what is considered public and what is considered private: thoughts and emotions previously kept to oneself now became publishable material. This confessional poetry, as Michael Davidson aptly describes it, relates to "a kind of domestic cultural containment in which crises of national security are acted out as dramas of private insecurity" (270). This publicly expressed, private insecurity is evident in the writings of the Confessional Poets—primarily the males—illustrating a fundamental inability of traditional gender models to function successfully in the post-World War II social climate. For instance, in "What Was Confessional Poetry?" Diane Wood Middlebrook explains that this poetry "investigates the pressures on the family as an institution regulating middle-class private life," and that "its principal themes are divorce, sexual infidelity, childhood neglect, and the mental disorders that follow from deep emotional wounds received in early life" (636). All the nasty skeletons that "proper" families

previously relegated to the darkest domestic closets were now very publicly paraded around in full daylight for all to see. The "Ur-confession," then, is that the American family has failed due to masculine instability and insecurity.

In addition to such internal forces that were creating fission within the American nuclear family, external events also created a perceived need to make public the private workings of the American household. For instance, in *The Psycho-Political Muse*, the critic Paul Breslin describes confessional poetry as part of a larger trend of personalizing public discourse during the Cold War. Such a trend is evident in the reactions against attempts to force public confessions during sensationalized Cold War events such as the House Un-American Activities Commission, the Rosenberg trials, and other venues that sought to identify, locate, and contain domestic Communism, even if it did not really exist. Similarly, Middlebrook links the creation and popularity of such verse to Cold War enthusiasm for psychoanalysis, Red-baiting, and the introduction of television into the American home. Television, she claims, is a primary catalyst of this poetic movement as it acts as a "solvent of boundaries between public and private life" (633). With this dissolution of the line between the public and private came the erasure of the demarcation between what is coded as male-specific and female-specific behavior, especially as it pertains to the Warrior Male.

When examined in the context of the Korean War, we can see that the works of the confessional poets depict a Cold War America wishing to retain its pre-World War II social norms—with breadwinner Warrior Male employed in the public sphere and Homemaker Wife relegated to the domestic—even as it slowly realizes that such desires are mere pipe dreams in the new Atomic Age. Though wishing to maintain their status

as Warrior Males and focusing their activities on the public sphere of war and politics, American men begin to see that they also have domestic roles within the home. Likewise, American women, having experienced the satisfaction of work outside the home during the war years, also began to realize the constrictions they face when contained within the traditional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker as portrayed in Cold War constructions of the nuclear family. Acknowledgements of such dissatisfactions with gender identification and domestic containment are the seeds of Confessional Poetry.

One of the definitive aspects of Cold War geopolitics was the notion of containment—of limiting the spread of Communism—and one of the first significant tests of the efficacy of the containment policy was the United States' involvement in the Korean War. As Camille Roman mentions in her article "Cold War 1950," at least two female poets, Elizabeth Bishop and Sylvia Plath, respond to the United States' entry into the Korean War with the thought that though women in this country were expected to perform the traditional roles of women in wartime (keeping the home fires burning, grieving for or welcoming home their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons), the reality is that they were acutely conflicted with the thought of war and felt a deep dissatisfaction with such hidebound gender roles (247).

For instance, Plath's poem "Bitter Strawberries" was published in *The Christian Science Monitor* on 11 August 1950, just a few weeks after the North Korean invasion of South Korea. It sets up a conflict between women who wish to maintain the militaristic Warrior Male ethos (and consequently the domesticated containment of the housewife) and those who seek an alternative. In this poem, three female voices discuss "the

Russians" as they squat "down between the rows" picking strawberries. As Roman points out, one of these voices clearly sides with the dominant "political ideology of Cold War militarism and 'containment,'" stating that we should "'Bomb them off the map.'" (248). A second woman, Mary, mentions that she has "a fella / Old enough to go. / If anything should happen . . .'" illustrating the anxiety of having a loved one summoned to war—a typical Korean War era concern since many men who had performed their Warrior Male duties in the Second World War were the same ones called back to active duty. As the Biblical Mary knew the pain of having a son sacrificed, so too does this poetic Mary seem to acknowledge the pain of having a son, father, brother, or lover sacrificed. The third female voice, belonging to a "little girl / With blond braids," simply and succinctly pleads "Don't" when the first woman reminds them that "the draft is passed," and that "we ought to have bombed them long ago."

Together, these disparate voices demonstrate at least three possible responses to Korea: those who fully consent to war in the Warrior Male tradition, those who hesitantly assent to this traditional military response yet remain fearful of the personal consequences, and those who seem to oppose not only the United States' involvement in the war but war in general. More importantly, Plath is illustrating the fact that though military service was by and large a male-only sphere of activity during the Cold War, the threat of intercontinental nuclear war not only endangered for the first time women and children once thought to be safe in domestic America, but that women were not excluded from experiencing war and the threat of war. The fact that they discuss matters previously contained within the masculine sphere of activities, and the fact that they posses as wide a range of views on the matter as any group of men, show that women in

1950 were as informed and as capable of geopolitical debate as any man. It is important to remember that any discussion of Cold War hostilities must necessarily involve long-range nuclear weapons of mass destruction. If the Warrior Male is valorized for his willingness to place himself in harm's way, and if that feature of his public performative role could now be fulfilled by women picking strawberries back home, then the demarcation between the combatant, public male and the passive, private female is erased.

Similarly, Elizabeth Bishop completed her poem "View of the Capitol from the Library of Congress" in October of 1950, when things were going quite badly for South Korean and U.S. troops and when Bishop herself was serving as Poetry Consultant for the Library of Congress. Having as its genesis the public performance of an Air Force band, the voice in this poem is privately conflicted between supporting the militarism so popular at the beginnings of wars and opposing what could easily become a nuclear conflagration.

However, this conflict can be read along gender lines as well, with an opposition between masculine military images and feminine nature images. In this poem, the voice tells us that:

> On the east steps the Air Force Band
> in uniforms of Air Force blue
> is playing hard and loud, but—queer—
> the music doesn't quite come through. (69)

Though the tunes emanate from a presumably all-male (or at least an overwhelmingly male-dominated) band, and the musicians are playing "hard and loud" in a style which is coded both musically and sexually as a stereotypical male performance, the band is in fact impotent, as its music does not consistently reach its intended audience and the

"little flags" which decorate the bandstand "feed their limp stripes into the air, / and the band's efforts vanish there." Clearly, if the band's purpose is to garner popular support for the burgeoning war in Korea, then the traditional Warrior Males' response to aggression—an armed attempt to contain it—is unsatisfying to the speaker. The same Air Force that bombed Germany into submission and dropped two atomic bombs on Japan just five years previously is now portrayed as an ineffectual collection of mute bandsmen with limp banners.

Puzzled as to why the military, masculine-produced music comes through to her only "in snatches, dim then keen, / then mute," the voice speculates that:

> The giant trees stand in between.
> I think the trees must intervene,
> catching the music in their leaves
> like gold-dust, till each big leaf sags. (69)

Here, the feminine-coded trees contain the strains of the music, filtering it and reducing both its volume and its effects. The trees are themselves silent; thoughts or actions possibly ascribed to them by the poem remain private even as they mute the public noise-making of the Air Force band. Given the Cold War context of this verse, it is indeed preferable to have the Warrior Male's voice muted, since "the gathered brasses want to go / *boom—boom,*" a reference to both high-ranking military officials—the "top brass" or the "brass hats"—and their expected desire to settle matters with an intense bombing campaign. The danger exposed here is that in 1950, the bombs may very well be nuclear, the opposition also has nuclear bombs, and the "boom-boom" they vocalize could be the Earth's death rattle rather than the sounds small boys playing war make with their mouths.

Though "Bitter Strawberries" is actually part of Plath's Juvenilia and few critics consider Bishop a Confessional Poet, both these works help illustrate the fact that Cold War America was not comprised of June Cleavers and Ozzie Nelsons. There was, in fact, much private criticism of the United States that was just beginning to be made public. In both these examples, Plath and Bishop show that adherence to traditional Warrior Male roles and responses in the Korean War would necessitate a corresponding urge to contain women within the nuclear home, silencing them and their experiences of war. Of course, with the sweeping changes in gender relationships that began during the Second World War, such a continuation of status quo is unacceptable. Thus, women confessional poets seem to be refuting the notion that the American woman's place is in the home, silent and ignorant of geopolitics. Their private realizations that American set-piece Warrior Male defending Domestic Woman no longer applies in the Atomic Age and their poetry became America's public confession that such gender-based social constructions were mere fantasies. More importantly, the notion that social commentary and political critique were subjects exclusively for male poets no longer applied. Thus, as women poets began to emerge into the public forum with the advent of the Korean War, male poets conversely retreated into the private realm of domesticity, confessing to the world their anguish over their perceived loss of power and status.

Recognized as the founder of the American Confessional Poetry movement in the 1950s, W. D. Snodgrass—himself a non-combatant veteran of World War II—takes as his poetic muse the daily household activities of caring for his daughter rather than singing of "arms and men" as would have been the expected role for him. He employs oppositions between masculine-coded, public metaphors and feminine-coded, domestic

images to describe his response to the Korean War and the concurrent dissolution of his own nuclear family. Even though he publicly and repeatedly announces his distaste for the term "Confessional Poet" (e.g. Dillon 278), Snodgrass succeeds as such in his ability to blend the external, political world with an internal, emotional one in a series of public confessions that show his personal disillusionment with traditional gender roles. His book *Heart's Needle*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1960, reflects some of the predominant social moods present in mid-twentieth century America even as it presents the poet's deepest sensitivities. Using the startling technique of drawing upon imagery from the national event of the Korean War to illustrate intimate personal feelings, his *Heart's Needle* sequence unabashedly explores one man's pain brought about by his being separated from his daughter due to divorce. Additionally, his admissions that national ideologies and societal institutions fail to sustain him during times of personal anxiety also serve as national confessions of the failure of gender-based roles and performances while presenting a new version of the Warrior male: one who finds himself quite at ease in a domestic setting.

First published in book form in 1959, *Heart's Needle* illustrates Snodgrass' ability to sustain the trope of juxtapositioning personal emotion against public events throughout a book-length work, a feat that not only places him among the confessional poets but makes him the genre's founder. As Paul Gaston points out, where other poets might dabble in confessing themselves in one or two poems among their verses, Snodgrass manages to do so not only the entire length of this book, but the length of his career as well (18). In *Heart's Needle*, Gaston further explains, the poetry achieves a sense of universal application primarily because it is not so much personal confession as

it is a record of shared "contemporary experience" (21-2). The personal experiences of the poet come forth as a public record of historical importance. Those who did not experience World War II themselves, or those who will not experience any war first-hand, rely upon the public records which began as private emotions.

Unquestionably, the most monumental of this century's shared contemporary experiences was the Second World War, an event that not only killed millions of people, but one that also irreversibly shaped America's vision of the world into what would become two cultures divided between Communism and Democracy. Himself a veteran of that war, having served in the Pacific theater after answering the draft in 1943, Snodgrass devotes just two poems to that portion of his life: "Ten Days Leave" and "Returned to Frisco, 1946." Thus, we see that the actual course of the war is less of a concern than the fact that war removes him from a stable domestic situation—his parents' home—and then returns him to an unstable post-war world of blurred relationships and an uncertain future.

"Ten Days Leave," though written in the third person, is obviously a first-hand experience. Describing a young man's thoughts just before being shipped off to fight, "to deal with certain strangers," the voice speaks its realization that he is unable to ever again see his parents and his childhood home in the same context as before he left them signals that the speaker's internal psyche, and the world's external political situation, have been irreversibly changed (2). Given a brief respite between training and battle, the speaker returns home only to find that his parents continue to naively "pursue their lives like toy trains on a track" (2). Likewise, his boyhood home is "like a small homestead / Preserved long past its time in memory / Of some great man who lived here and is dead"

(2). Family and home have ceased to be viable entities to him and are now just reflections of a past to which he can never return. The biographical W. D. Snodgrass left his home in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, to participate in World War II, but the poetic internal emotions recorded in this poem might have been the same had he left home in response to a different external reason. The point here is that a major political event caused change to occur in both the inner mind and the outer world. The actual nature of the event is less important than the fact that it serves as a catalyst, a force that cause the character to move from familiar surroundings to a new environment.

Moving fast-forward from induction to discharge, Snodgrass represses any actual events of the war—neither his personal involvement nor historical facts are described in "Returned to Frisco, 1946." The voice describes combat only in the sense that the soldiers "scrambled like rabbits / Up hostile beaches" (4) leaving us with the idea that such actions were the instinctive reactions of frightened, timid animals rather than rational, heroic warriors. It seems that the more important battles are yet to be fought as returning veterans confront the social, technological, and economic changes that simultaneously allow for a comfortable peacetime domesticity while making the Warrior Male himself obsolete. The postwar prospects that lay in store for them seem bland, even foreboding, as the gray California shoreline and the surreal woman's voice that boomed sentimental songs to them over a plane's loudspeaker made them "dulled and shaken / By fear" as they reentered a society "intent on luxuries and its old habits" (4). The voice realizes that the acquisitive consumer culture of post-war America and the associated tendency to confine people to predetermined gender roles is as socially repressive as the totalitarian regimes they had just defeated. Similarly, two of their first

American sights they see are Alcatraz Island, deceptively "lavender with flowers," and the "barred" Golden Gate Bridge, which "stood like the closed gate of your own backyard" (5). With these images, we see the beginnings of Snodgrass's Cold War confession: the stereotypical single-family dwelling with its white (here golden) picket fence, the no-down-payment, own-your-own house that would become the Levittown icon in post-war America, is described as a prison rather than a refuge even before the first batch of veterans makes landfall.

These two poems which open *Heart's Needle* are ostensibly "war poetry," but they are less concerned with war than they are with the Warrior Male's sudden irrelevance in the Atomic Age. We do not hear of the speaker's personal deeds of heroism (perhaps there were none), nor do we hear of one nation's victorious triumph over another (perhaps there wasn't one). What we derive from "Ten Days Leave" and "Returned to Frisco, 1946" is the sense that though American men have emerged from a global war, they are also descending into a different type of conflict, a "Cold War" that will not be decided by masculine armies arrayed on a battlefield, but by the abilities of certain nations to construct sustainable domesticities.

Snodgrass's confession, then, is that he, a veteran himself, doubts the validity of the male-dominated institutions of armies, governments, and fatherhood he has just risked his life to preserve. Other verses in *Heart's Needle* further examines the poet's internal doubts about public institutions and his gradual assumption of a mask, a false persona that enables him to continue to function as a Warrior Male in a world that no longer requires his services as such.

This idea of men donning the false identity of Warrior Males to survive a man-destroying threat is well illustrated in the poem "μητις . . . . . ου τις." In this poem, the "I" is the voice of the Greek hero Odysseus from Homer's *The Odyssey* who, having wandered the world in the face of danger as the American GIs had done during the war, finds that he must suppress his true identity in order to avoid being consumed by forces larger than him. The Greek of the title comes from Homer's dialogue between the wandering hero Odysseus and the man-eating Cyclops, Polyphemus, roughly translated as two variations of the same phrase, perhaps a question and a response: "No one? No one." In the myth, Odysseus cleverly convinces Polyphemus that his name is "No-Man" or "No-One," and begins to make good his escape. "*No-One* is hurting me!" shouts Polyphemus to the other Cyclopes, who understand his words literally and ignore him. In the poem, Odysseus says that "pure disguise / Has brought me home alone to No Man's land" (6). In the myth, Odysseus succumbs to vanity and the overwhelming need to make his true identity known to his former tormentor. He shouts out his real name to the Cyclops, at the risk of being nearly crushed by a thrown boulder. In the poem, however, the voice does not have the courage to shout out his real name. Snodgrass knew that in paranoid Cold War America, with its McCarthy-led witch hunts for communists, he dare not reveal his private doubts about the nation in the public arena of literature unless he was able to disguise those feelings with a poetic persona. Unlike brave (but vain) Odysseus, he feels it is better to remain silent behind his façade, though he is thus doomed "To look at nothing I dare recognize" (6), to live in a bleak, soulless no-man's land of public acceptance and not die in a world that recognizes his personal identity.

There is evidence of the typical Confessional Poet's interest, even obsession, with clinical psychotherapy, a treatment in vogue in the 1950s and common among the writers of this genre. Literary critic J. D. McClatchy observes that Snodgrass dedicates this poem to R. M. Powell, Snodgrass's psychotherapist who used the technique of blind confession: Snodgrass would relate his personal troubles not to a visible doctor, but to a presence that remained out of sight throughout the entire therapy session, as a Catholic penitent in the confessional booth speaks to a priest who cannot clearly see him through the intervening screen (290). In this sense, the patient could have the best of both worlds. He exposes his soul to no man, in this case a "Dr. No-Man," who can both hear his confession and yet remain as blind to Snodgrass's identity as the Cyclops is to Odysseus'. This is, of course, a matter of self-deception. Priests can easily recognize their parishioners by their voices and doctors can easily discern their patients by glancing at their appointment calendars and billing records. Such self-deception is not without value, though, as even the appearance of anonymity can assist penitent, patient, and poet in examining what he would otherwise repress.

The poem "Winter Bouquet" presents more Second World War imagery and more of the Cold War sense of emptiness and unfulfilled passion that Snodgrass confesses to have in *Heart's Needle*. Set in, of course, winter, this verse describes the irony of a bouquet that is composed of dead, dry, relatively unattractive plants. Usually, flowers evoke feelings of fertility and fecundity, but the flora gathered in this poem are "bittersweet, brittle stemmed Scotch broom, / perennial straw flowers, grasses gone to seed / . . . dry vaginal pods of milkweed" (20). Here, the speaker is reminding us that there was an opportunity cost during "those war years," measured in lost husbands,

unborn children, and unfulfilled women, as "many a wife / wandered the fields after such pods to fill life / preservers so another man might not be lost" (20). Publicly, it seems a noble gesture towards the war effort to help save some other woman's husband after yours has died, but privately we know that the loss of a soul mate cannot be totally healed through charitable acts of patriotism. The speaker also confesses to perpetrating a minor episode of subversion to the delight of the neighborhood children. He breaks open a milkweed pod and allows the seeds to "drift / across the neighbor's cropped lawns like an airlift / of satyrs or a conservative, warm snow" (20). In this instance, the speaker sees his desecration of the neighbors' crew-cut lawns not as being antisocial, but rather as a salvation—just as the Berlin Airlift of 1948-9 was depicted as bringing life, beauty, and hope to the confined children of West Berlin, starving not only for food, but for color and beauty as well. During "Operation Vittles," the very domestic codename for the airlift, an American pilot named Lieutenant Gail Halvorsen, after seeing the enthusiasm of German children for American chewing gum and candy, began the practice of jettisoning tiny parachutes attached to chocolate bars as he ferried his loads of grain and coal into Berlin (Parrish, *Berlin* 255-7). Halvorsen bucked military authority with his unauthorized distribution of sweets just as the speaker in "Winter Bouquet" bucks society norms with his wanton blowing of milkweed seeds.

Using the bleak, sterile imagery of dead flowers arranged in a bouquet contrasted against the fertile possibility contained in their seeds, the speaker in "Winter Bouquet" confesses the private desire to contradict the public norm of the monotonously green, carefully cropped suburban lawn with his unregulated, disordered scattering of weed seeds. The hypermasculine satyr image and his licentious distribution of seed represent

an aspect of the Warrior Male ethos that was repressed in Cold War America—the desire to copulate and impregnate at will—though expressions of such a craving would be the very stuff of another Cold War institution, *Playboy* magazine. "Winter Bouquet" is also the likely inspiration for Robert Lowell's assessment of Snodgrass's poetry, saying that he "flowered in the most sterile of sterile places, a post war, cold war Midwestern university's poetry workshop" (qtd. in McClatchy 282). This comment, however, ignores the fact that the external environment—the Cold War university—is of much less importance to the poetic process than the fertile regions of the poet's internal landscape. The boundaries between them are dissolved.

With "A Cardinal," we have another confession; this time the voice expresses doubt about the military-industrial complex built during the Second World War and perpetuated throughout the Cold War as the backbone of Democracy's defenses. Central to this confession is an indictment of the military profession in general and of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) in particular. Finding himself ensconced as a G. I. Bill scholar in a military-surplus Quonset hut, the speaker likens his existence to leftovers in a refrigerator, kept ready "for the onset / of some new war or other" (26). Of course, he is already fighting this new war—the Cold War—though he doesn't seem to realize it at this time. Against the industrial background noises of freight cars whining on the railroad tracks and trucks passing "out on the superturnpike" (27-8), the speaker finds his internal quest for knowledge and beauty interrupted by the external activities of consumer culture. What is even more disturbing to him, though, are the "college air cadets" and their marching cadences, "creating / for the school and market / the ground bass of our credo-- / faith in free enterprise / and our unselfish forces / who chant to

advertise / the ancient pulse of violence" (28). "Go to hell!" he screams at the advertising firms who "praise soap and garbage cans" and who convince young people to join the Armed Forces while in college, to "sell / their minds to retire at forty" (30). Participating in an ROTC program and serving in uniform is of course very much in the Warrior Male tradition, but here the poetic voice connects advertisements for domestic products, "soap and garbage cans," with the recruiters' "choirs of pretty / slogans and catch-phrases" and other enticements to join the service (29). With the poet's equating the feminine-coded act of shopping with the masculine-coded act of military enlistment, the boundaries between these gender-based performances become quite blurred. Also, retiring at the age of forty has always been a key incentive in convincing a young man to "sign his days to sergeants, / his soul to a committee" and his heart-beat to the corporate "pulse of violence" (30). However, the voice reminds us that military service is not just a job, but contains the very real possibility of death and the realization that not all military men live to see their retirement checks. He points out the absurdity of risking one's life for pay, implying that no matter how much one is paid enlisting is always a "bargain" for the government since it receives the priceless value of young men's lives in exchange for only a few dollars a month (30).

The title sequence of this volume, "Heart's Needle," offers significant examples of how the poetic voice sees the previously disparate spheres of male- and female-coded activities beginning to conjoin. Additionally, he sees a difference between himself, a World War II veteran, and the young soldiers fighting in Korea. As Diane Wood Middlebrook puts it, the use of Korea as a backdrop to musings about the difficulties of child rearing, the monotony of performing mundane household tasks, and the pain of

broken marriages helps to illustrate "the plight of loveless men doomed to banishment and violence and useless labor" (639). Though many who fought in that conflict were actually recalled reservists who had participated in the Second World War, the persona feels he has more in common with the stereotypical housewives of 1950s America than with the soldiers of the Cold War, though both he and those fighting in Korea feel a pervasive chill about their bodies and souls as they face actual death in snowy foxholes on the battlefield or metaphoric death in the uneventful domestic world of middle-class America.

The opening lines of this poem, "Child of my winter, born / When the new fallen soldiers froze / In Asia's steep ravines and fouled the snows," serve at least two purposes (42). They situate a personal event historically in a public chronology (the daughter is born in early 1951, the Korean War began in the summer of 1950), and they contrast one couple's joy over the birth of a single child against the grief of thousands of couples who lose their children in the war. Using the Korean War as a metaphor for his own divorce and loss of child custody is particularly fitting here: in both cases, what was once whole is now divided. Ethnically, the populations of North and South Korea are one people, one family, but external forces (the division of politics) forces them to not only break away from each other, but to aggressively oppose each other—just as the politics of the divorce court pit one spouse against the other, one parent against the other, in their squabble over community property and children. This, combined with a nearly universal veteran's pragmatic distaste for war (even noble wars fought for glorious, patriotic causes) is the basis for the speaker's first confession in "Heart's Needle": his reluctance to enter into a dispute over ownership of his daughter.

The stereotypically male response to such a confrontation would be to defend his territorial and property rights, to launch an all-out offensive against the invading forces, even though it may be directed against the very woman that he had previously sworn to love. Though never actually in combat, Snodgrass was close enough to the action in the Pacific theater during World War II to witness the horrors of war, and the speaker in this poem echoes the poet's realization of war's absurdity (Hoy 4). The speaker reminds us that "We read of cold war soldiers that / Never gained ground, gave none, but sat tight in their chill trenches" (44). Just as in the image of the child suspended over a puddle, each parent holding one of her arms, so are the soldiers and civilians who live in the war zone precariously suspended over certain calamity by the warring national authorities who try to pull them towards their own particular form of political ideology, "Till something somewhere has to give." "It's better," the speaker tells us, to let "the poor soldiers live / In someone else's hands / Than drop where helpless powers fall / On crops and barns, on towns where all / Will burn. And no man stands" (44). During the periodic hot flashes of the Cold War (such as in Korea, the Dominican Republic, and Vietnam), no one political system or nation really gained or lost much territory, but thousands of individual people lost all they had, even their lives. Because of this no-win situation that the private person is ultimately faced with during public conflict, the speaker confesses to preferring compromise, even surrender, to continued war. Such sentiment was not something to reveal during the 1950s, and during even later years. It would most likely be seen as unmasculine in the personal context and unpatriotic in the public arena. In the back of his mind, the speaker hopes that by relinquishing his claim on his daughter and sparing her the pain of figurative division, the authorities would exercise the wisdom of

Solomon and award her completely to him, declaring him the "real mother" (45). However, this wish is as unlikely to be fulfilled in divorce court as it is in the political world. Never has an army won a war by leaving the battlefield to its enemy in an effort to spare the indigenous inhabitants. It is arguably a terrific notion, but one that will perhaps never be realized in either interpersonal or international disputes.

The bipolar alignment of the political world during the Cold War, and the tentative truce accepted by the separating couple, is reflected in the lines "Our states have stood so long / At war, shaken with hate and dread, they are paralyzed at bay; / once we were out of reach, we said, / we would grow reasonable and strong. / Some other day" (58). In retrospect, we see the accuracy of these verses, as with the Cold War policy of MAD: the Mutual Assured Destruction attained when the superpowers have parity or near-parity of nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, preventing either side from full-scale war, though relatively smaller brush-fire conflicts would break out from time to time. Likewise, the court-mandated divorce decree would bring the warring spouses to a workable agreement, though the speaker still retains the dream of having his daughter with him always, "some other day" when his estranged wife would be more reasonable.

So as the masculine voice confesses his desire to hear that that some wise judge will allow him to legally state to his daughter, "I am your real mother," he demonstrates a desire to break away from stereotypical gender roles (45). He shows a sincere willingness to assume the woman's role in childrearing, along with an admission of his failure at performing the divorced man's role of "absentee bread-winner" (53). Middlebrook points out that Snodgrass finds himself in a very awkward position. Being

"discharged from the armed services and from marriage at the same time," he is excluded from demonstrating his masculinity as either a Warrior Male or as a conventional father figure (639). So though he is saved from risking his life in war, he still feels "torn," as social conventions of the day all but required men to fulfill the Warrior Male role, and he finds that fear has silenced his thoughts about "that cold war where, lost, I could not find / My peace in my will" (42). He is indeed a lost man, a member of neither army nor family. Though such isolation preserves him from both battlefield and bedroom conflicts, he finds no peace in such an insulated life.

The alternative role, that of the feminine-coded child care giver, does not prove satisfactory, either. Though Middlebrook goes on to claim that his status as neither soldier nor husband allows him the opportunity to assert his "social identity through relation to his child," rather than clinging to the "old notions of manhood that underlie the will to make war," the poetic voice demonstrates unease at this new role, too (639). Not having the advantage of learning to cook or keep house at his mother's side as a girl of his generation would have been expected to do, his attempts at playing homemaker are bumbling at best. Rather than cooking nourishing meals at home that the child will eat, he usually takes her to local restaurants. When he does finally attempt to fry "omelettes and griddlecakes," the child refuses to eat, having earlier filled up on Halloween candy (54-5). Further demonstrating his perceived inability at single-parent childrearing, his attempts at disciplining his daughter fail. Though he says to her "I thumped on you the best I could / which was no use," the daughter wins the parent-child stalemate and he acquiesces to put lemon juice in her milk (53). Likewise, when he sends her to her room along with her uneaten Halloween meal in an attempt to force her

to eat it, she holds out for days, managing to go hungry longer than he can go unmoved by her hunger (55). Though he may have been unique in his public confessions of his inability to effectively play either the father or the mother role, in the post-war years Snodgrass evidently was not alone among American men who were making attempts at assisting with childrearing. In a 1947 *Parent's Magazine* article entitled "Pops and Popism," Edward A. Strecker, a male psychiatrist, states that "being a real father is not 'sissy' business. It is not an avocation, a hobby to be pursued in spare moments. It is an occupation. And for the father and his children, it is the most important occupation in the world and for the world" (qtd. in Filene 186). Perhaps as he was responding to Philip Wylie's moms and "momism," Strecker was also attempting to console men who found themselves in positions similar to that of Snodgrass. Excluded from the Warrior Male role while the Korean War was raging, they may have felt emasculated, especially if they were also unable to claim the title of Head of Household due to divorce. And though *Life* magazine ran an article extolling the virtues of "The New American Domesticated Male" in January of 1954 (qtd. in Filene 187), the voice in "Heart's Needle" clearly expresses unease as such domestication and demonstrates doubts that such a role will ever fully replace that of the traditional Warrior Male.

Another noted Confessional Poet of the time, Robert Lowell, likewise comments on his perceptions that the Warrior Male role has lost its usefulness in the modern world while at the same time expresses doubts about his ability to perform the domestic alternative roles of housekeeping and childrearing. Lowell was Snodgrass' teacher and mentor at the University of Iowa in the early 1950s, so it comes as no surprise that the two poets influenced each other's work to some extent, though many critics speculate as

to the jealousy Lowell might have felt when both Snodgrass and he publish books of poetry in 1959, but Snodgrass' wins the Pulitzer Prize.

With the poetry in Lowell's volume entitled *Life Studies*, we see a nearly complete dismissal of traditional lines of domestic containment, along with a rejection of the social constructs of gender-specific roles. Though a conscientious objector who chose imprisonment over military service during World War II, Lowell's poetry reflects a preoccupation with war, a facet of life that dominated both his own personal childhood and the public world in which he lived. From when he was born into the family of a career Naval officer in 1917 until he died in 1977, his life was influenced by the two World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam. As Thomas Travisano describes it, war and "the problem of war" shaped Lowell's life and every phase of his artistic development, with "themes of childhood and war . . . insistently linked in [his] poetry, which constantly sets images of war against images of domestic conflict, 'man with and against woman, child with and against adult'" (70). Publicly admitting the private realizations that not only does the Warrior Male fail as an adequate role model but also that the American home fails as a domestic safe haven from external turmoil are central themes for Lowell and are especially evident in his 1959 collection entitled *Life Studies*.

In "91 Revere Street," a prose piece which describes in detail the conflicts occurring between his father's lackluster military career and his mother's contrived gentility of the domestic setting where Lowell was raised, we have his confession that he is unable and unwilling to emulate his ancestors whose portraits—mostly in military uniform—line the hallways and staircases of his ancestral home. In fact, he derides the martial legacy his family expected him to follow, noting that one of his ancestors, Mordecai Myers, rather

than being a career solider with permanent Army rank was instead only a "major *pro tem*" and held his position as warrior male only through the end of the War of 1812. Thus Myers' military uniform was nothing more that an actor's costume, with Lowell stating that "on a civilian, even a civilian soldier, the flamboyant waistcoat was stuffy and no more martial than officers' costumes in our elementary school musicals" (14). Here, Lowell is stating his position that such gender-based roles are just that: roles to be performed according to societal norms and expectations.

Lowell continues to devalue his father's role of Warrior Male, noting the absurdity of the precise fashion in which his father stencils his three new galvanized garbage cans with the lettering "R. T. S. Lowell—U.S.N." as if those refuse containers were actually his battleships (32). Similarly, in "Commander Lowell," the poet tells us that his father was usually more of an embarrassment that a source of pride. Since "his training was engineering," Commander Lowell was a shore-bound sailor, able to find himself at home neither among the golfing country-club set his mother preferred nor in the sailing communities of the Navy or "Sunday yacht club," where he was expected to excel (71). Instead, Commander Lowell sings "Anchors Aweigh" as he suds himself in his bathtub, and using his "ivory Annapolis slide rule" as a guide squanders away the family's fortune on ill-advised investments (72). The Warrior Male skills and knowledge he attained during his years in the Navy have been rendered inconsequential by his domestication. Pressured into becoming a "land-lubber" sailor by his strong-willed wife, he no longer drunkenly sings his service's anthem with his comrades in arms in exotic ports-of-call nor does he use mathematics to calculate cannon trajectories or plot the

course of war ships. With the character of Commander Lowell, poet Lowell demonstrates that domestication reduces the Warrior Male to the absurd.

However, poet Lowell also rejects the domesticity that his mother sought to establish for the family. For Lowell, his mother's forced gentility she constructed in their house at 91 Revere Street in Boston was as devoid of meaning as military service. Purchased at the instance of his mother and going quite against the Naval regulations that his father was bound by, this house was intended to become for the Lowell family a symbol not only of middle-class stability, but also of upper-class gentility and means. Just as Commander Lowell spends his time in civilian evening society dressed in a tuxedo but required by his commanding officer to change into his Naval uniform and sleep in his quarters overnight, poet Lowell finds himself torn between two diametrically opposed worlds, though this information comes to him slowly. In fact, Lowell states that "several months passed before I realized what was happening—we had *two* houses!" (23). Representing the two extremes of a Warrior Male dominated patriarchy and an aristocratic matriarchy, these two domiciles offer Lowell only increasing conflict and internal angst instead of doubling his sense of domestic security.

The stalemate between Robert Lowell's parents and their attempts at living two conflicting lives eventually broke, however. In 1927, Commander Lowell finally relented to his wife's incessant pressure and resigned his position in the Navy, "the one institution in which he seemed to have a place, an identity, and a recognized history" (Travisano, "Wars Civil" 73). Lowell describes this act of surrender as his father finally abandoning all hopes of living the life of the Warrior Male, when "with seamanlike celerity, / Father left the navy, / and deeded Mother his property" (71). Here, not only

did Commander Lowell, who was once the youngest ensign in his Naval Academy class and who commanded a "gunboat on the Yangtze," retreat into the constructed domesticity of 91 Revere Street, but as with a woman whose property becomes her husband's when she marries, the Commander's property (to include his masculinity) becomes chattel for the domineering wife. Lowell finds that neither the hypermasculinity of military service nor the hyperdomesticity of Bostonian high society are adequate for him in the Cold War era. Both venerable performances had run their courses by mid-century, and Lowell confesses for himself and for the nation that something new is in order. As he blurs or even removes the line of demarcation that traditionally contained poetry, ideas, and people either in a feminine domestic sphere of activity or in a masculine militarized sphere of activity, he likewise dismisses the notion of the Warrior Male as the only possible role model for male children, along with the equally inadequate idea of idealized domestic life in a nuclear family as the only viable locus for children of any gender.

Just as the Confessional Poets show that neither traditional gender roles nor the nuclear family itself are safe havens against the anxieties of the Atomic Age, the concept of the home bomb shelter likewise proves to be a false sanctuary from the turmoil of the external world. Intended to shield the American family from nuclear blast and fallout, the efficacy and practicality of such domestic retreats eventually proved illusionary as people realized that isolating themselves from the external world in an artificially constructed domesticated sphere would not sustain them—neither physically nor spiritually—as social human animals. What good could come from a family who survives a nuclear attack only to emerge from their domesticated fortress to find a world

in ruins? Likewise, what would be the outcome if American men shunned completely their traditional role of warriors in favor of the completely domesticated role of "househusband"?

Aptly illustrating the inability of the American home to shelter the American family from external geopolitical turmoil is a startling photo essay that appears in the 30 March 1953 issue of *Life* magazine. In the article "A-Bomb vs. House," readers are presented with graphic photographs of a typical suburban dream home—a six-room colonial ranch house—flying apart in the face of an atomic blast. Specially constructed and then leveled by the Atomic Energy Commission and the Federal Civil Defense Administration as an attempt to "inject an overdue sense of urgency into its campaign to organize a sensible defense of American cities" (21), this was one of two such dwellings (one sited 3,500 feet from ground zero and the other 27,500 feet away) that actually prove the futility of defending traditional homes against nuclear attack rather than demonstrating the wisdom of constructing home bomb shelters. Filled with all the consumer goods that Cold War Americans sought—televisions, appliances, and automobiles—and populated with mannequins representing a stereotypically constructed American family of breadwinner husband, homemaker wife, and cherubic children, these houses became what Wendy Kozol describes as "signifiers of middle-class suburban affluence" (181). The after-blast photograph shows this American family lying crushed beneath the wreckage of their house and their domestic consumer goods as the accompanying text telling us that "where the mannequins had been disposed in domestic contentment, there was now only confusion. The family group was now only chaos and confusion. The family group has been scattered to the four corners and the blonde

ejected from her bed" (25). All the things that comprise the Cold War fantasy of safety through domestic consumption and reliance upon traditional gender roles ultimately end up in a tangled heap of rubble. As with the work of the Confessional Poets, this photo-essay illustrates the notion that the traditional archetype of Warrior Male is impotent in the face of atomic bombs, and retreat into idealized American domesticity is likewise no bulwark against external aggression. Confessional Poetry of the 1950s examines this dilemma of American society, and shows that idealized domesticity and the Warrior Male ethos were both as ineffectual at protecting the family as were the plasterboard walls of the atomic bomb test-site houses.

However, most Warrior Males were not yet ready to relinquish control of the situation, and so sought an alternative domestic construct that would eliminate the weaknesses of the archetypical American family and domicile while maintaining at least the basic ideas of traditional domesticity and their presumed mastery over them. A new venue was needed that would somehow address the unstoppable trend toward eliminating gender barriers in regards to occupations, while still excluding women from the militarized, external world of geopolitics and warrior activities. He found such a place—at least for a short time—in the homosocial, men-only family groups that were the Air Force bomber crews of the Strategic Air Command. Here, it seems, technology, social change, and traditional warrior ethics could successfully cooperate to reaffirm Warrior Male's predominance in American society.

CHAPTER 2
A FAMILY OF MEN:
STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND AND THE DOMESTICATED MALE

As the Second World War evolved into the Cold War, American film and fiction began to display a sense of uneasiness in regards to the place and function of the Warrior Male in society. Of special concern was the idea of domestic containment: of restricting the Warrior Male within the confines of hearth and home. To be sure, such wing-clipping was made much more attractive by the post-war economic boom that built affordable houses in suburban Levittowns; filled the kitchens and living rooms of those houses with electric appliances, central heat, and televisions; and the garages with tail-finned Fords, Dodges, and Plymouths. As Vice President Richard Nixon attempted to persuade Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev of America's cultural and political superiority through household appliances in the "Kitchen Debate" at the Moscow trade fair in July 1959, so too did the domestic allure of a new American home—bought with a no-down-payment Veterans Administration mortgage—attempt to persuade the Warrior Male into abandoning barracks life and his buddies for a master bedroom and a wife. If Nixon was perhaps suggesting to Khrushchev that the Cold War could just as well be a competition between which countries could produce the most and best washing machines instead of tanks, planes, and missiles, then he was proposing a domestication of warfare. With their generation's war behind them, many people wanted to abandon all things military in favor of focusing on American home life. However, entering the

domestic world entirely would require American men to relinquish their roles as warriors, and thus their traditional places of social dominance. As the Confessional Poets of the 1950s demonstrate, many American men felt torn between two roles that both presented problems: the traditional Warrior Male role was beginning to lose its appeal in the Atomic Age, while they were also left unprepared to take on the alternative role of domestic husband and father. Attempts of reconciling this drive towards feminine domestication with the desire to maintain male warrior ethics and status is illustrated in a unique type of film that was produced in the 1950s, a sub-genre of the conventional war film that has as its subject matter the bombers and crews of the Cold War.

Ostensibly depicting the military actions of Air Force bomber crews of the Cold War, these films actually present an attempt to create a substitute, all-male nuclear family: one that responds to the desire to create a militarized domestic ideology that capitalizes upon the allure of the consumer culture while at the same time allowing men to exhibit their Warrior Male attributes and retain their traditional social hierarchies. Starring the Strategic Air Command (SAC), the arm of the Air Force given the task of carrying nuclear weapons to the Soviet Union in the event of war, these films show that a major source of masculine anxiety during the Cold War was not necessarily choosing between civilian life and the military, but choosing between civilian domesticity and military domesticity. In the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, military men—and especially aviators—had to decide where their loyalties lay: with their nuclear family of wife and kids, or their "nuclear" family of commanders and subordinates. Additionally, these films help demonstrate the complications that arise when Warrior Males strive to

construct all-male societies apart from women in their attempts to maintain their outdated perceptions of societal roles.

The character of the aviator and his evolution from solitary hero to family member is especially apropos for this discussion, for throughout the twentieth century Americans have held aviators in high esteem. Described by Michael Paris in his book *From the Wright Brothers to Top Gun* as "technological warriors," early flyers were perhaps the first to combine technology with personal courage and physical fortitude to conquer an unexplored facet of the world (2). Some like the Wright brothers, Charles Lindbergh, Wiley Post, and Amelia Earhart are most noted for their peacetime aeronautic achievements. Others, beginning with the First World War's aces like Eddie Rickenbacker, entered the public spotlight because of their wartime exploits against an armed enemy. Almost all aviators before World War II, however, are noted for their solo accomplishments: Lindbergh was the first to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927, Earhart was the first woman to do likewise in 1932, and Wiley Post was the first to circumnavigate the globe, flying his plane alone in 1933. While there are not a few films which depict the aerial exploits of these pilots, this chapter focuses on the military flyers. For while post-World War I barnstorming and aviation record breaking did indeed capture American imagination during the inter-war years, the main focus of this dissertation concerns the changing perceptions and construction of the Warrior Male in American society.

Since most early airplanes were designed for only one occupant, it is no surprise that flying was primarily a solo activity during the first few decades of the twentieth century, and thus air war films made in the 1920s and 1930s depict traditional masculine

heroes engaging in single combat. Early films like *Wings* (1927), *Hell's Angels* (1930), and *The Dawn Patrol* (1933) all center on individual pilots in fighter planes engaged in aerial dogfights—true to the classical scenario of heroic men dueling between themselves. Even the very titles of some films of this genre reflect a focus on traditional masculinity and individuality, for example *The Lone Eagle* (1927), *Men of the Sky* (1931) or *Cock of the Air* (1932) all emphasize the fact that aerial combat in the first part of the century was quite the masculine occupation, with the pilot ensconced in the "cockpit" with a phallic "joystick" control shaft protruding between his knees as he physically wrestled his machine in an attempt to outmaneuver and dominate his male opponents and kill them with his machine gun.

The trope of the heroic solo flyer continues right up to the very beginning of the Second World War. Prior to the United States' entry into that conflict, there was a collection of volunteer American aviators who joined Chiang Kai-shek's air forces as the famous "Flying Tigers," supporting China's fight against Japan. Immortalized in films such as *Flying Tigers* (1942) and *God is My Co-Pilot* (1945), these rugged individualists defied the pervasive American tendency towards isolationism and followed their traditional masculine models in waging single combat, flying solo over "The Hump"—the Himalayan Mountains—for a cause in which they believed. Not surprisingly, the lead male actors in some of these films, Gary Cooper in *Dawn Patrol* and John Wayne in *Flying Tigers*, for example, would be best known throughout the rest of their acting careers for their portrayals of individualistic soldiers, cowboys, and Wild West lawmen acting alone, facing villains in individual combat, true to the traditional Warrior Male model. Although solitary pilots were the first aviators to be deified by Hollywood, those

"Lone Eagles" were soon to be eclipsed by a different type of flyer: crewmen of long-range bombers who flew their combat missions in cohesive, cooperative groups rather than as individual duelists. These crews, as portrayed in Hollywood films, come to represent a new model of masculine performance: one that retains the Warrior Male ethos while at the same time creates a new type of domesticity.

Throughout World War II and especially throughout the Cold War, the real heroes of the air were bomber crews—corporate entities comprised of individuals who realized that success and survival were dependent upon communal action rather than individual heroics. For instance, just three months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, General Jimmy Doolittle's Tokyo raiders, flying B-25 bombers off the deck of the aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Hornet*, dealt the first blow against Japan, as seen in the movie *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944), and became some of the Second World War's first heroes. Later in that conflict the aircrews of World War II's daylight bombing raids over Germany, immortalized in such films as *Twelve O'Clock High* (1949) and *The Memphis Belle* (1944 and remade in 1990), perpetuated the notion that the way to become successful Warrior Males was through cooperation in a rigidly hierarchical military corporate group rather than through the classical heroics of single combat. The bombers that these men flew became not only their domiciles, but often surrogate women—both mothers and wives—as well. This homosocial bonding and exclusion and replacement of women is evident in many war films produced from the end of World War II in the mid 1940s until the Cuban Missile Crisis in the early 1960s and presents a crucial part of the record of the complex—often shifting—attitudes towards masculine relationships in Cold War America.

Such interaction among men is not unique to Cold War American airmen, however. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick brilliantly points out that there exists among men a "homosocial desire" that creates a pattern of "male friendship, mentorship, entitlement, rivalry and hetro- and homosexuality . . . in an intimate and shifting relationship to class," evidence for which she locates in mid-eighteenth- to mid-nineteenth-century English novels as well as in several of Shakespeare's sonnets. She further states that "no element of that pattern can be understood outside of its relation to women and the gender system as a whole" (*Between Men* 1). The films discussed here illustrate Sedgwick's arguments but relocate the examples from the drawing rooms of English manor houses to the cockpits of B-52 bombers. The desire towards homosocial activity is a constant that transcends time and place.

In the 1950s, young men who were too young to have served in either World War II or the Korean War nevertheless were often presented with the Warrior Male as their expected role model, though the threat of nuclear war all but ensured that they would never be able to replicate the battlefield heroics of their fathers, nor would they be called upon to defend American domesticity in an actual shooting war. The plethora of war films they consumed gave them an outlet for this perceived desire to serve, though. By creating and safeguarding artificial domiciles—bands of men joined together as air crews in the United States Air Force's Strategic Air Command—they were able to both live in and defend a domesticated social unit in accordance with the Warrior male ethic that had been drummed into them for years. This complex interaction is especially evident in mid-century America where, at least until television-watching supplanted

movie-going as the primary means of middle-class entertainment, central issues of American domestic life were presented in theaters.

As Lary May points out in "Hollywood's Cold War Americanism," the basic perceptions of what Cold War American home life should be originated in the movies. Using data derived from author Studs Terkel's interviews, May shows that though "commitment to domestic life and the baby boom centered in the growing suburbs during the fifties," the post-war movement towards domestication began during the 1940s and "movies were deeply implicated in that shift during the war years" (117). Cold War movies, especially those depicting the new American Warrior Male of the bomber crewman, continue this notion that wars are chiefly fought to preserve and enable domestication, yet due to the unique social and political atmosphere of the 1950s, such films also display tension between the traditional family of husbands, wives, and children and the constructed family of men living and working together as air crews. As Julian Smith puts it, "the treatment of war in a nation's films provides a crucial index to popular concepts of patriotism, national purpose, and relationship with the rest of the world" (5). An examination of films from the Cold War period which deal with the interaction between the men who comprise the air crews of the Strategic Air Command and their families does indeed give us such an index and thus a deeper understanding of the pressures and conflicts American men of the 1950s must have experienced.

Though such films were not actual products of the Armed Forces, the military was nevertheless complicit in their production. Lacking the popular, nationwide appeal they enjoyed during the Second World War, the American Armed Forces during the Cold War began to present themselves, practically advertising themselves, through the

cinema. Movies became valuable as a means of conveying information about the services, as vehicles to generate and sustain patriotism and taxpayer support for an ever-increasing defense budget, and as an informal recruiting tool. Though they did not actually produce films themselves, the Armed Services' support for certain films—those which cast the military in the most favorable, patriotic light possible, of course—created a *de facto* "School of American Military Cinematography." By providing or withholding combat footage of actual battle scenes, loaning or denying to loan troops and equipment, and allowing or prohibiting films to play in theaters on military posts in the United States and overseas, the military had the economic power to make or break almost any feature film produced during the Cold War.

Additionally, when viewing war films made during the early Cold War period, one is struck by the nearly ubiquitous title frames—usually placed at the end of the opening credits and just before the opening scene or, alternately, at the very end of a film—that dedicates the movie to the American fighting man or even to a particular service or unit. Notable, too, is the frequent mention of military "technical advisors" in the films' credits, complete with the advisors' military rank and branch of service. Such devices serve as marks of endorsement. Movie goers could watch these war films knowing that not only were the technical aspects correct, but also that the film, and its writers and producers, were acceptable to the Department of Defense and the centrist values of Cold War America.

As Lawrence H. Suid points out in *Guts & Glory*, the Armed Forces, particularly the Air Force and the Navy, used Hollywood during the 1950s not only to promote military service in general, but also as a means of carrying on the interservice debate

over which weapon system should bear the burden of national defense and thus garner the lion's share of defense dollars: the Navy's aircraft carrier-based jets or the Air Forces land-based, long-range bombers (111-2). Films such as *Flat Top* (1952), *Men of the Fighting Lady* (1954), and *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (1954) all glorified the courage of Navy pilots who launched their planes off the pitching decks of carriers, while other films such as *Above and Beyond* (1952), *Strategic Air Command* (1955) and *Bombers B-52* (1957) extolled the virtues and tactical superiority of positioning bombers on American or American-controlled soil. The post-World War II boom in war pictures was so great that James Forrestal, the first U. S. Secretary of the Department of Defense, created in 1949 the Motion Picture Production Office. Headed by Donald Baruch, this office was meant to regulate the different services' assistance to Hollywood film directors.

However, the Motion Picture Production Office, along with the fledgling Department of Defense, soon lost much of its clout when Forrestal resigned his position as Secretary of Defense in March of 1949 due to failing mental health. The lack of a determined Secretary, along with the outbreak of the Korean War in June of 1950, reduced the Motion Picture Production Office to a mere rubber-stamp layer of bureaucracy, approving whatever film projects the various services wished to support. Thus, until the early days of the Vietnam War in the first part of the 1960s, each service--Army, Navy, and Air Force—practically had carte blanche to provide or deny millions of dollars worth of assistance to any film maker whose project they felt projected them in a favorable light or advanced their service-peculiar goals. Because they were seen as favorably demonstrating the Air Force's unique ability to safeguard and deliver the

nation's atomic arsenal, films such as those in the 1950s SAC trilogy received approval and support, while the anti-Air Force and anti-war *Dr. Strangelove* and *Fail-Safe* of the early 1960s did not.

Of course, Hollywood's film makers of this era saw the practical advantage of creating films that presenting only glowing images of the Armed Forces. As Suid points out, few studios in those days were willing to gamble large sums of money on unconventional or controversial films (115). They provided the types of movies that they knew the public would attend and that the military would allow in their theaters. Since many war films often require dramatic, large-scale action scenes that can only be realistically and economically produced with the cooperation of the Armed Services which provide companies of tanks, squadrons of planes, battalions of men, fleets of ships and even actual combat footage, scripts that depict the Warrior Male in anything but a sanctified light would never get a green light themselves. Additionally, with the advent of the Red-baiting, repressive U.S. House of Representatives' Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1947, most Hollywood writers, directors, and producers decided to toe the political line and avoid the threat of being blacklisted as Communists or "fellow-travelers," deprived of work, or even imprisoned—as was the fate of the "Hollywood Ten" in 1948. Thus the standard trope of an all-conquering, always-victorious Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps, comprised of traditional Warrior Male role models and based on popular perceptions of the Second World War, continued to be the standard story line for war films throughout the early Cold War.

Because of the sheer number of war films produced during and about the Cold War, any detailed discussion must of necessity focus attention on but a few. For the

purposes of this dissertation, the Strategic Air Command trilogy of *Strategic Air Command* (1955), *Bombers B-52* (1957), and *A Gathering of Eagles* (1963)—along with a few other pictures with similar themes—will present a representative selection of films that demonstrate the tension American men felt when presented with the necessity of choosing between the traditional domesticity of home, hearth, and family and the constructed domesticity that comes from membership in a military organization.

Perhaps the prime example of the conflict between the desire for homosocial bonding as a member of a military air crew and the desire for domestic security as a civilian is found in *Strategic Air Command* (1955). In this film, Air Force Reserve Lieutenant Colonel Robert "Dutch" Holland (played by Jimmy Stewart, an actual World War II veteran with credit for twenty-five bombing missions over Germany as a B-24 pilot) is notified by his former World War II commander, General Castle, that he must leave his civilian career as third-baseman for the St. Louis Cardinals to serve once again as a pilot on active duty. In a scene that emphasizes the startling, dramatic contrast between peacetime domesticity and military service, an enormous B-36 SAC bomber flies alarmingly low over the Cards' baseball field—its six huge radial engines and four turbojets howling and generating dense condensation trails—as the players pause in their game and watch it pass. Compared to General Castle in his military uniform, Dutch Holland seems childish and inconsequential. In fact, whenever characters in the film refer to a ball player, they use the term "boy," as in "That boy has a good arm," or "How are the boys playing this season?" However, when those very same people don Air Force uniforms, they are referred to as "men." The people inside the uniforms do not change, but other people's perceptions and treatment of them do change dramatically.

In spite of his "social" promotion from baseball-playing boy to bomber-flying man, Dutch resents the military intrusion into his domestic life. "I've done my share!" he complains to General Castle, "Why do you have to recall me?" Dutch's predicament would have been familiar to the audiences viewing this film in 1955, but it is made even more poignant in his case. He had just signed a $70,000 a year contact with the Cardinals, was married just five months to a woman we later discover is pregnant, and received his call-up notice on the very same day he and his wife were having a house-warming party in their new American dream home. So much bad news coming all at once nearly becomes farcical, but such life changes due to mandatory military service were commonplace and deeply felt.

As the film progresses, the reluctant Dutch (a character based upon real-life baseball legend and World War II veteran Ted Williams, who was likewise recalled to active duty in the 1950s), wavers between his Warrior Male role and his domestic role as husband and father, but eventually chooses to remain in the Air Force rather than to return to baseball after his twenty-one-month tour of duty has expired. Dutch gradually allows military domesticity to replace civilian domesticity. For instance, when he first reports to his new duty station, the Air Police stop him at the gate and refuse to allow him onto the base as he is dressed in a civilian suit rather than a regulation uniform. The of wearing unique clothing—military uniforms—is important to show that living within the military's domicile, the air base, is an exclusive privilege reserved only for the Warrior Male. Without his outward emblem of military service, Dutch is prevented from leaving the civilian world of juvenile ball players and entering the mature world of

SAC. His initial indignation at having to reenter military service is replaced with indignation at being excluded from military service.

Similarly, when Dutch is finally checked-out and qualified to fly again, he pilots his plane dressed in the requisite flight suit and parachute, but continues to wear his St. Louis baseball cap under his headphones. This small measure of retaining some degree of the civilian gradually disappears, though, and he eventually begins wearing his complete regulation uniform. In fact, by the end of the movie he is accused by his wife of being as totally occupied with the Air Force as the gruff, no-nonsense commander of SAC, General Hawkes (a character based upon the real SAC commander from 1948 to 1957, General Curtis LeMay).

Dutch's evolution from being a member of a civilian family to being a member of a military one is also evident when his wife gives birth to their daughter. Dutch's plane had crash-landed while on a training mission over Greenland when the baby was born, and Dutch—after nearly being killed—is understandably anxious to finally get home to see his wife and baby. However, when he finally lands back at his home station, he takes time to look at the new bomber that has recently arrived—the swept-wing B-47—before he goes to see his civilian family. General Castle pulls Dutch aside and, like some unsavory character "Psssting" an unwary rube into a back alley to buy counterfeit wristwatches, asks if he wants to see something really special. They enter an enormous, heavily guarded hangar and, as the music dramatically swells on the sound track, Dutch lays eyes on the new airplane with the same slack-jawed awe that a suburban husband reserves for the latest model of tail-finned Detroit convertible. "She's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen in my life!" says Dutch, not of his wife or his

baby girl in the hospital, but of the shiny new bomber sitting in the hangar. His emotional allegiance has switched from his civilian domicile to his military one, and when he says he "can't wait to get his hands on that baby," he refers not to his wife, his romantic "baby," nor to his new-born daughter, but to the baby that SAC has just delivered: the B-47 Stratojet.

To the men of Strategic Air Command, their fellow crew members not only become their Warrior Male families, but their planes become their Warrior Male domiciles and even, to some extent, "their" women. During his first flight in a B-36, the crew chief takes Dutch on a tour of the gigantic bomber. From the forward flight deck, to the aft compartment, to the radio room and points in between, Sergeant Bible shows off the airplane just as a proud homeowner would show his new house to an envious neighbor or a real estate agent to a prospective buyer. Looking remarkably like a family relaxing in a model suburban home of the 1950s, the pilots seem comfortable and well in control in their master bedroom, the radar navigator stares at the television screen in the family room, and the machine gunners scan the skies for "bogeys" from their bunk beds. At the very heart of this nuclear-capable domicile is, of course, the kitchen where Sergeant Bible shows Dutch the built-in electric coffee maker. Flying eight miles above the earth's surface with a garage-sized bomb bay, a B-36 could have compared favorably to any model home in Levittown (though its 230 foot wingspan and 162 foot length would have made it much superior in square footage!), and the crewmen could have easily filled the domestic roles in any television situation comedy of the day.

As mentioned, bombers could serve not only as surrogate domiciles for the Warrior Males of SAC, but as surrogate women as well. The tradition of naming

military aircraft after women significant to the crews and painting risqué pictures of stereotypically beautiful women on planes' fuselages (a process known as "nose art") begins before the Second World War and has been only recently discontinued in the Air Force. Sometimes the planes had conveniently generic names for women such as "Lucky Lady," "Arctic Queen," "Butterfly Baby," or the famous "Memphis Belle," which had two feature films made about its exploits over Germany. Bombers were also named after Hollywood actresses or the characters they played, as in the case of "The Outlaw" which also sported a picture of busty Jane Russell from the movie of that name (Lloyd xvii-xix). Often, airplanes carried the names of specific wives and sweethearts, such as the "Enola Gay" which dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, or Chuck Yeager's "Glamorous Glynnis," which was the first plane to break the sound barrier. Jealously guarded and maintained within the confines of a guarded air base, the bombers of SAC are as cherished, cursed, loved, and tended as any mate. Elaine Tyler May and Allan Brandt both point out the link between sexual potency and military power as evinced by nose art which depicts scantily clad or even nude women (cited in Sherwood 90-1). The perceived ability of the aircrew to dominate beautiful, sexy women is transferred as a similarly powerful ability to kill the enemy.

Besides being a wife or lover, the military airplane—and especially the bomber—can also be seen as a surrogate mother for the Warrior Male. The fact that bombers carry their loads in the "belly" calls to mind that women carry their offspring in their abdomens, and airplanes' bomb bay doors must open wide, just as vaginas must dilate before women can give birth. Likewise, both bomb loads and babies are measured and judged by weight, with a 2,000-pound payload being more effective than a

500-pound mission, and an eight- or nine-pound full-term baby more robust and desirable than a four- or five-pound preemie. In many films about bombers, (*Battle Hymn* and *Dr. Strangelove*, for example) a recalcitrant bomb sometimes gets snagged in the bomb rack or otherwise fails to clear the bomb bay doors, requiring some brave crewman to manually cut away the stuck bomb in a sort of midair Caesarean-section operation. Klaus Theweleit takes this metaphor even further, claiming in "The Bomb's Womb and the Gender of War," that men have an innate desire to give birth as women do, to create rather than destroy (291). Referring not only to bombs in general but also to the atomic bomb in particular, he states that "the makers of the bomb are the first men to have been really successful in bringing this oldest of male fantasies into material reality" (295). The difference here, of course, is that when Warrior Males give birth it results in a loss rather than an increase of life.

Yet in the film SAC is also portrayed as actually producing life. When Dutch tells his wife (played by June Allyson) that he might not be around when their baby is born, he attempts to make her feel at ease, saying that there are "fifteen-hundred babies born a month in SAC," as if it is the military organization and not the women giving birth. Similarly, in *A Gathering of Eagles*, when Victoria Caldwell, the new Wing Commander's wife, asks about all the children that seems to be present at the air base, another officer's wife tells her that "SAC has just about the highest birth rate than anywhere in the world, even China!" In these cases, it is the military organization rather than the military aircraft that is the procreative maternal figure. Such discussions of military fertility help allay the pervasive Cold War fear of Communists overtaking Capitalists in production of weapons, consumer goods, and even people. It also helps to

further blur the lines that formerly separated the role of the Warrior Male from that of the domestic woman. SAC crewmen are now no longer just the masculine destroyers of life, but also take credit for the feminine creation of it as well.

Another, perhaps less obvious, case for the bomber serving as a maternal substitute in the all-male aircrew family can be found in Randall Jarrell's 1945 poem "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner":

> From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,
> And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.
> Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
> I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.
> When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose (277).

The ball turret is a cramped, spherical machine gun compartment suspended beneath the belly of a B-17 or B-24 bomber. Perhaps the least desired job in the airplane, the ball-turret gunner had to crawl through a narrow hatch to get to his post and then remain hunched up in a fetal position, firing his guns between his knees, throughout the entire mission. The ball-turret gunner fought his war always cramped, isolated from the outside world and connected to the plane and the other members of the crew by a thin umbilical cord of intercom wires and oxygen tubes. Sheathed in a thick, fleece-lined leather jacket, crash helmet, gloves, and goggles, he was as insulated and separated from the rest of the world as any fetus. The ball-turret gunner flew in an aluminum-skinned, technological womb. If the ball turret is a metaphorical womb, then in Jarrell's poem the washing-out of the dismembered, bloody gunner's body becomes a metaphorical abortion or even menses, reinforcing the idea that the plane serves as a surrogate mother. Though this time the fetus was aborted, each new bombing mission brings the possibility

that the next ball-turret gunner will emerge alive from his metal womb, headfirst and breathing.

Audiences watching *Strategic Air Command* discovered that there is yet another birth canal located within Cold War bombers. Unique to the B-36 "Peacemaker" is an eighty-five foot long tunnel, about two feet in diameter, that passes over the bomb compartments and allows crewmen to travel from the front of the plane to the rear. However, because of the narrowness of this passage, the men must lie on their backs on a small wheeled cart and propel themselves, hand-over-hand, headfirst down this metallic birth canal. "I never can get used to that thing," Sergeant Bible tells Dutch Holland as he emerges, squinting and blinking from his first passage through the B-36's shaft. One might even come to the conclusion that this birthing process is superior in some ways to the actual event, for one can travel both ways in the bomber, choosing to guide the plane with the senior "adults" in the cockpit or drinking coffee and watching the radar screen with the "junior" crewmen in the rear. Moving back and forth from adolescence to adulthood and back again is not possible in the actual world of civilian domestic life, but it is daily routine for the Warrior Males who have used technology not only to allow for male-birth, but also to overcome the physical constraints of biology, time, and space.

Finally, in nearly every film made during the Cold War that is even remotely connected with the Air Force, there is an obligatory in-flight refueling sequence. Often using the very same footage of an actual in-flight fuel transfer provided by the Air Force, a large, slow-moving bomber flies slow and steady while a smaller, faster KC-135 tanker airplane floats above it and extends a phallic refueling boom out its rear hatch to

penetrate the receptive bomber below. In *A Gathering of Eagles*, even the radio call sign for the tanker plane, "Ramrod," is phallic. In *Bombers B-52*, trouble ensues when the "female" bomber is unable to admit the "male" tanker when its fuel hatch sticks closed. Similarly, there is much consternation in *A Gathering of Eagles* when a fuel leak in the "female" bomber requires the "male" tanker to pull its boom out prematurely in a midair *coitus interruptus*. This obvious sexual imagery is taken to the absurd in the opening scene of *Dr. Strangelove*. Using the exact same stock footage as in *A Gathering of Eagles*, but this time set to the romantic song "Try a Little Tenderness" instead of a dramatic, military tune, the in-flight coupling is consummated. Thus, the bomber could become for its aircrew a home, a lover, or a mother, and sometimes all three simultaneously. If Cold War Warrior Males found it difficult to exist in an atomic-age domestic world that made their existence practically moot and their traditional values inconsequential, then assuming membership in an all-male, military domicile may alleviate their alienation.

There is other evidence in *Strategic Air Command* of the friction resulting from the differences between civilian and military domesticity. Early in that film, Dutch's wife Sally is clearly displeased with the on-post quarters she is forced to live in when Dutch is first called back to active duty. Compared with the luxurious, modern home they had when Dutch was playing third base for the Cards, their military domicile is a dump with naked light bulbs suspended from wires in the ceiling, broken Venetian blinds hanging askew in the windows, and stark, white-washed walls devoid of any decoration. Noticing that Dutch is embarrassed at their decline in living conditions, Sally sarcastically says that she is happy living in "such luxury" and tries to reassure

them both by saying "I married you, Dutch, not the house." But her displeasure with military domesticity becomes evident in the joy she expresses when Dutch is transferred to MacDill Air Force Base in Florida and they can move back into the civilian house they lived in during baseball's spring training.

In actuality, Air Force General Curtis LeMay did make great efforts to improve living conditions for SAC families during the Cold War. He obtained funding for "furniture, bedding, drapes, etcetera to make the barracks more homelike for the airmen" (Lloyd 117), thus expanding Warrior Male domesticity into the realm of interior decorating. Similarly, with the help of Senator Kenneth Wherry from Nebraska, LeMay was able to get congressional funding for new quarters for married personnel. Called "Wherry Housing" by the SAC families who occupied them, these prefabricated houses were another instance of military domesticity replicating, and replacing, civilian domesticity. As in the case of the male Confessional Poets in the 1950s who fussed over cooking, laundry, and child rearing, this military concern over things domestic illustrates the mid-century trend towards blurring traditional male and female roles.

After he has become fully inculcated in the Warrior Male bomber family of men, Dutch Holland finds that he is now in a position to transmit that ethos to others. His radio operator states that he is set on leaving the Air Force family in favor of his civilian one. "No more of this high-pressure stuff for me," the crewman says, "A fella likes to get home once in a while. See his wife and kids." Likewise, Ike Knowland, the plane's radar navigator, complains to Dutch "I did my share once," being a World War II veteran also. Bemoaning the fact that he had to give up his television repair business, newly built house, wife, and kids when he was called back, Knowland also anticipates

leaving the service as soon as his twenty-one-month hitch is up. Dutch manages to persuade both of them to remain in their adopted Air Force family and be true to the Warrior male ethos—as evinced by the fact that Knowland stays on board the bomber with Dutch during the Greenland crash, even after the other men had bailed out.

Just as W. D. Snodgrass found himself excluded from both the Korean War and his own family, so too does Dutch Holland find himself excluded from SAC and from major league baseball. As *Strategic Air Command* winds to a close, the General tells Dutch that he is medically unfit for further flying due to the shoulder injury he incurred during his Greenland crash. Given the opportunity to take a desk job, this Warrior Male refuses, knowing that such a career move would exclude him from the surrogate Air Force "nuclear" family that has eclipsed his civilian nuclear family in importance. His military life now at an end and his baseball career likewise terminated because of his shoulder, Dutch ponders his dismal future as he gazes out the General's office window while a formation of B-47s streaks overhead. Initially torn between two competing models of domesticity—one masculine and military and one feminine and civilian—Dutch ultimately finds himself excluded from both.

While *Strategic Air Command* seems to valorize the Warrior Male model of domesticity over the civilian, *Bombers B-52* appears to do just the opposite. In this film, Master Sergeant Chuck Brennan (played by the stodgy Karl Mauldin), an experienced airplane mechanic, constantly attempts to maintain a traditional nuclear family even as he finds himself part of a military "nuclear" family. When a bachelor officer who knew Brennan from World War II lands at Brennan's repair site in the middle of the Korean War in a sleek Sabrejet fighter named "Lucky Lady" and asks Sergeant Brennan if he is

still married, Brennan replies "Same wife, same little girl. How about you?" The dashing jet pilot, Captain Jim Herlihy (Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.), convinced that his Warrior Male life of hard drinking, hard fighting, and hard loving is superior, winks and says "Same life, same big girls." Thus we see at the very beginning of this film the tension that exists during the Cold War when American men contemplate participation in either the masculine domesticity of the military or the feminine domesticity of civilian life.

In another instance of Sergeant Brennan's attempting to spread the gospel of middle-class domesticity, he yells at an airman who works in the Base Commander's office "You married yet?" every time he walks by. When the airman replies "Not yet," Brennan barks at him "What's holding you up?" Additionally, when he discovers that Colonel Jim Herlihy (the same jet jockey who extolled the pleasures of bachelor life in Korea earlier in the movie) is dating his daughter (Natalie Wood), Brennan calls him a "Casanova with wings" and warns her that dating him is like dating an octopus. Brennan wants his daughter to become neither a playmate for a jet pilot nor part of the military family which he and his own wife chose. There is evidence that such "playboy" types really did exist in sufficient numbers as to become stereotypes. As John Darrell Sherwood points out in *Officers in Flight Suits*, his study of Korean War Air Force pilots, when men such as the Herlihy character did associate with women, they "generally fell into two categories: officers' wives and bar-room sluts. . . . In short, [they] yearned for a completely operational environment devoid of wives, where women entered the picture only as prostitutes" (6). Often, Sherwood states, many Korean War pilots would make temporary wartime arrangements with prostitutes when on leave in Japan, renting luxurious apartments and hiring their women for days and even weeks at a

stretch, constructing a place where they could "flee from the war and re-create domestic life" (134). Of course, "shacking-up" with a prostitute in a hotel room does not exactly replicate middle-class American ideals of domesticity as espoused in "Ozzie and Harriet." If anything, it is an attempt to create temporary monogamy, though such a concept is perhaps a contradiction in terms. Not surprisingly, then, Brennan insists that daughter Lois look outside SAC for a traditional, civilian, civilized husband who does not fly planes nor has served in war.

There is additional pressure to abandon the military for domestic life. During his annual leave, Sergeant Brennan and his nuclear family visit an old Air Force buddy who has become quite affluent in the civilian business world. The friend offers Brennan a job if he leaves the Air Force, and the sergeant seriously contemplates the lucrative proposition. Torn between continuing to serve his country and taking the civilian job offer that would please his family, Sergeant Brennan is finally swayed by the same incentive that influenced the decision-making process of many Cold War American men—the new models come out. Knowing that Sergeant Brennan is crucial to the success of the SAC family of Warrior Males, Colonel Herlihy plays his trump card and tells Brennan that their base is going to be the first to receive the new B-52 "Stratofortress" bomber, the largest such aircraft in the world. Just as the arrival of the new B-47s to replace the B-36s help convince Dutch Holland to make the Air Force and SAC a career in *Strategic Air Command*, so too does the arrival of B-52s to replace the B-47s entice Brennan to stay in uniform in *Bombers B-52*.

In a complete reversal of attitudes, Sergeant Brennan abandons his desire to live as a civilian within a military organization and Colonel Herlihy abandons his adherence

to the playboy lifestyle expected of jet pilots and is himself domesticated by Brennan's daughter. As their individual choices of domesticities flip-flop, we see that these two life styles are not nearly as mutually exclusive as purported. Additionally, Cold War audiences can take comfort in seeing that even as the sergeant and the colonel reconcile civilian and military domesticities, a new generation of SAC recruits arrives at the base hospital for their inoculations, perpetuating the continuous line of American men who leave their homes to enter the military family of the Warrior Male. As a recruiting tool, *Bombers B-52* assures young men that life in the Strategic Air Command is as comfortable as their lives had been in their parents' domiciles. As an Air Force promotional tool, it showcases American military technology by parading the latest in nuclear-capable hardware. As a patriotic message, it helps convince the nation that though personal sacrifices are necessary for the duration of the Cold War, Americans do have the finest military forces in the free world.

The third installment in the SAC trilogy is *A Gathering of Eagles* (1962), a film that ostensibly shows how well SAC protects the nation, but in actuality demonstrates how vulnerable our nuclear-equipped forces were to the vagrancies of interpersonal conflict. In this picture, Colonel Jim Caldwell (played by Rock Hudson, perhaps the first major Hollywood star to publicly disclose his homosexuality) takes command of a SAC wing that has recently failed its latest Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI), an exercise designed to test the vigilance and readiness of the Air Force's nuclear-capable divisions. Intent on whipping his unit into shape—for both national security and for personal career motives—Caldwell instantly switches his allegiance from his civilian domestic duties to his military domestic duties. Previously, his main concern was if his

wife's spinet piano would arrive at their home in due time and if it would fit in with their other furniture. After taking command, however, he becomes so completely involved with rejuvenating his SAC family that he chooses to live in the BOQ, the Bachelor Officers Quarters, rather than in the base commander's family quarters. How similar is Colonel Caldwell's divided living arrangements to that of Commander Lowell's owning a house at "91 Revere Street" while military regulations force him to sleep on base in his government quarters.

In his zeal to serve his SAC family, Caldwell destroys not only his own civilian family, but also those of the men around him: the other Air Force Colonels whose rank insignia—silver eagles—give this film its title. One of his first official orders is to increase the time that bomber crews spend on High Alert status: blocks of days that the B-52 crews must spend living in Spartan barracks located right next to the base's runway to ensure their rapid response. Though warned that additional time spent away from their homes and families would negatively impact troop morale, Colonel Caldwell nevertheless increases their High-Alert duty time from three days and nights to seven days and nights. Caldwell's distaste for men who complain of being apart from their families is not merely a Hollywood character-developing device. During the Korean War, Dr. Lucio Gatto diagnosed a debilitating psychosis that afflicted many aviators which he called "Fear of Flying Syndrome" or FOF for short (Sherwood 54). Gatto further discovered that about half of those crewmen diagnosed with FOF were actually World War II combat veterans and most were "married men with definite home responsibilities" (qtd in Sherwood 56). Rather than being the steadfast, mature "old men" of the military domicile, pilots such as those illustrated by the Dutch Holland

archetype are in fact the crews' weakest links. The implication here is that it is impossible for a bomber crewman to be both military man and family man. He had to totally sever his ties to home and hearth if he is to become a Warrior Male.

As in the first two films in the SAC trilogy, the Air Force used the occasion of *A Gathering of Eagles* as an opportunity to trot out the latest in airborne military technology. In one scene, the men are preparing to retrofit their B-52s with the new "Hound Dog" missiles, and in another there are hints of yet another new bomber on the drawing board: the B-58. However, this time not even the lure of working on new aircraft seems to be enough to convince some of Caldwell's men to remain loyal to him and his military clan. His single-mindedness towards military matters and total avoidance of civilian issues makes him unacceptable to Cold War era Warrior Males.

Meanwhile, since Caldwell has all but abandoned his wife in favor of spending all his days and much of his nights at work, his second-in-command and long-time friend, Colonel Hollis Farr, begins escorting Victoria to all the functions and activities that her husband normally should: lunch in nearby San Francisco, the ballet on their night out, even to the Base Exchange for the week's grocery shopping. When seen together time and time again at the Officer's Club, other couples on base begin gossiping about the perceived affair between Hollis Farr and Victoria Caldwell. Had he been even the least concerned with preserving his nuclear family, one would expect Colonel Caldwell to take steps to quash those rumors of his cuckolding. However, such matters are trivial to him when compared to the demands of his military duties, and his failure to react in any manner leads Victoria to question his love for her and she contemplates

leaving him. To the Caldwells, reconciliation between the competing modes of domesticity—military and civilian—seems impossible.

Just when it seems impossible for military and civilian domesticities to coexist, Victoria discovers the key to Cold War happiness while serving as a volunteer "Candy Striper" at the base hospital. When one of her husband's men recovers from the anesthesia administered during his appendectomy, he rings for the night nurse and, instead of asking for a message to be delivered to his wife and kids, he asks for news about his plane crew: if they passed their portion of the ORI. His dedication to military duty, along with his wife's acceptance of the fact that she and her natural family are subordinate to her husband's military family of men, gives Victoria the answer to the film's dilemma. Americans can indeed maintain both civilian and military domiciles during the Cold War as long as they keep one overriding factor in mind: concerns for the Warrior Males' family of men are paramount to those of the civilian family. At the end of the film, Victoria not only supports her husband's devotion to military duty, but even becomes more Air Force-minded than he, spouting military jargon and making sure his Red Alert phone is within easy reach.

Though not technically a Strategic Air Command movie (the heroes in this film fly Navy single-seat Panther dive bombers rather than Air Force multi-crewed heavy bombers), *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (1954) echoes and amplifies some of the same ideas found in the SAC trilogy. Navy Lieutenant Harry Brubaker, the protagonist, is yet another World War II veteran called back to active duty during Korea. Resentful at having to leave his home and law practice behind, Brubaker reminds his commander that he fought in the New Guinea, Leyte, and Okinawa campaigns, asks why he is required to

once again make personal sacrifices. Nevertheless, during Brubaker's first visit with his wife and children after his spending a year in Korea, he abandons them at the Officer's Club so that he can bail out of jail a member of his military family—the helicopter pilot who had rescued him after he was forced to ditch his plane in the sea.

Closely following James Michener's 1953 best-selling novel of the same name, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* tries to explain to the American public why the nation was involved in the Korean War at all. Not even a declared war but a "police action," Korea was largely fought by the same generation which had won World War II. Perplexed why they had to fight a second war, men like Brubaker nevertheless did their duty and fought bravely. Admiral Tarrant attempts to explain to Brubaker (and thus to the American audience) the need for American involvement in such faraway and seemingly inconsequential places like Korea: "All through history men have had to fight the wrong war in the wrong place. But that's one thing they're stuck with . . . . A jet pilot does his job with all he's got because he is here. It's as simple as that. Militarily, this war is a tragedy, but if we pulled out [the Communists would] take Japan, Indo-China, the Philippines. Where would you have us take our stand? At the Mississippi?" This Domino Theory of successive nations falling under Communist rule, first espoused by President Eisenhower in a press conference in April of 1954, would continue throughout the Cold War and be a major argument for intervention in places like Vietnam and Honduras. It seems to work with Brubaker, though, and by the end of the film he is as patriotically dedicated to his mission as the Admiral.

Interestingly, despite having the full cooperation of the Navy, this film actually depicts the futility of war. Though a brave, dashing jet ace who eventually succeeds in

leading his flight of dive bombers to destroy the bridges at Toko-Ri, Brubaker ultimately crashes behind enemy lines and ends up dying in a muddy ditch, shot by some nameless North Korean infantryman and in the company of his helicopter pilot comrade rather than his family.

Upon hearing of the loss of Lieutenant Brubaker, his military-family son, Admiral Tarrant glumly sits back in his commander's chair on the bridge of his aircraft carrier and wonders aloud, "Where do we get such men?" That question is even more poignant when one realizes that in previous decades, America found "such men" in each succeeding generation of Warrior Males: soldiers begat soldiers. Admiral Tarrant had hoped that his own son would carry on the Warrior Male tradition, but he was killed in combat. Though the Admiral had taken a special liking to Brubaker because his temperament and even physical appearance are similar to his dead son's, Brubaker also dies in combat and his children are both girls. At least in 1950s America, there would be no future combat pilots coming from either the Tarrant or the Brubaker line of Warrior Males. The decline of masculine dominance through primogeniture is also evident in *Strategic Air Command* as Lieutenant Colonel Dutch Holland's wife has a baby girl, in *Bombers B-52* as Sergeant Chuck Brennan's only child is a daughter, and in *A Gathering of Eagles* as Colonel Jim Caldwell and his wife remain childless. Societal constraints and expectations would prohibit American women from serving in combat planes until the very end of the twentieth century, and even then in the face of much male resistance. Interestingly, Diane Wood Middlebrook points out that the four major Confessional Poets, Lowell, Snodgrass, Sexton, and Plath, were also the parents of daughters—no sons (636). Perhaps some degree of angst for both these pilots and these poets comes

from the lack of male heirs and the associated sense of failure as parents to produce such offspring. Clearly, the place of Warrior Male in American society is presented in these films as being at risk, if by nothing else than sheer demographics.

However, even as these films were being produced and viewed in Cold War America, there was a coincidental undercurrent of dissent present in the nation that saw folly and absurdity in placing so much trust in the military in general and the Air Force's ability to deter nuclear war in particular. In 1954, Mac Hyman's novel *No Time for Sergeants* (later made into a television show, a New York stage production, and finally in 1958 a motion picture starring Andy Griffith) told the humorous story of Will Stockdale, a well-meaning but naïve young man from rural Georgia drafted into the Air Force. Drawing upon his own experience as a bomber crewman with twenty-three combat missions over Japan, Hyman exposes the Air Force as a collection of bumbling yokels, self-important but negligent officers, and worn-out sergeants focused on nothing but keeping things quiet until they reach retirement age.

Similarly, in 1955 Joseph Heller began writing his classic anti-war novel *Catch-22*, which was eventually made into a film in 1970. Though set in World War II, this is clearly a Cold War era text, with critiques of rampant consumer capitalism, mandatory loyalty oaths, and paranoia over un-American conspiracies. Heller himself admits that "virtually none of the attitudes in the book—the suspicion and distrust of officials in the government, the feelings of helplessness and victimization, the realization that most government agencies would lie—coincided with my experience as a bombardier in World War II." Heller goes on to say that the "anti-war and anti-government feelings in the book belong to . . . the Korean War, the cold war of the fifties" (qtd in Whitfield

214). Thus *Catch-22*, with its bizarre assemblage of subversive Warrior Males attempting to coalesce as effective Air Force bomber crews, is quite at home in this discussion.

The protagonist is a B-25 bombardier stationed on the fictional Mediterranean island of Pianosa, Captain John Yossarian. He lamely attempts to bow to Cold War consensus and establish a military domicile both in his plane and in his tent, where his bunkmate, Orr, is constantly trying to convert their military-issue tent into an ersatz suburban tract home, gradually adding a concrete floor, running water, central gas heat, and even a wood-burning fireplace. Thwarting Yossarian's half-hearted attempts at living up to the established Warrior Male ethos are the sadistic, opportunistic, ignorant, and greedy officers and airmen in his military domicile, the 256th Squadron. Above all, Yossarian must face the inescapable Catch-22, the mythical clause in Air Force regulations which states that insane men cannot fly bombing missions, and any one who refuses to fly bombing missions must not be insane and is therefore compelled to fly bombing missions.

Exposing all the absurdity of the Army Air Force, of American society, and of war in general, *Catch-22* both reflects a growing dissatisfaction with Cold War militarized society and provides but one of the early anti-war texts that would influence so many young people during the 1960s as they contemplated their generation's involvement in Vietnam. As in *No Time for Sergeants* but with a much darker, sinister sense of humor, *Catch-22* criticizes the traditional Warrior Male ethic and refutes the value of military social constructs as presented in Cold War movies represented by the SAC trilogy. Rather than being torn between the allegiance to military duty and their

desire to participate in civilian life and its associated consumer culture, the airmen of these novels reject them both as they are viewed as either the ends or the means of the same Warrior Male ethos they choose to reject.

So as the Cold War progresses from the end of World War II in 1945 to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, we see reflected in the war movies of that period, especially in the sub-genre of bomber movies, both a valorization and a critique of the traditional Warrior Male ethic and the associated attempts to create an all-male, military-based form of domesticity than excludes both the feminine and the civilian. Though first presented as an effective bulwark against communist aggression and nuclear annihilation, such social constructs are later seen as absurd, ineffectual, and no proof against nuclear war. In fact the power and value of the very accoutrements that distinguish the Warrior Male from his civilian, domestic counterpart and give him his battlefield might—his weapons, vehicles, and uniforms—would also come under critical scrutiny as Americans in the 1950s turned their eyes upwards to scan the horizons for invaders from outer space.

CHAPTER 3
"OUR WEAPONS ARE USELESS!": MALE ANXIETY IN SCIENCE FICTION FILMS OF THE COLD WAR

The Cold War was especially dramatic for the American men who had fought in the Second World War and who now seemed puzzled that their heroic efforts seemed to ensure neither national security nor personal stability. At stake was not only the survival of the country, but also the legitimacy of the roles, functions, and supremacy of the traditional masculine warrior, a theme often depicted in science fiction films produced during the 1950s. Political events and technological advancements which shook American complacency and confidence in its Minute Men, Dough Boys, and Dog Faces during the early post-war years, combined with an increase in "flying saucer" sightings and concerns over airborne attacks from our real world enemies, gave Hollywood the ingredients for what would become an entire genre of popular films: the science fiction monster movies produced in volume during the 1950s, films which in turn would influence an entire generation of adolescents.

Threat of alien invasion, either from without or within, became the basis for nearly all science fiction films of the 1950s and created a metaphor for an anxiety palpable among American men of that period: that encroachment of new technology would erode their entrenched social domination as well as accelerate the blurring and even dissolution of traditional gender boundaries. Rockets, robots, and death rays replaced old-fashioned human feats of bravery and strength as the battle-winning

components in these films. The heroic primacy of the stock character and cultural icon of the G. I.—the "regular guy" performing traditional masculine warrior role in both actual combat during World War II and in the plethora of war films spawned by that conflict—was assailed not only by the invading Martians and Venusians at the Saturday matinee, but also by the Atomic Age figure of the scientist and his arsenal of technological inventions. When American Warrior fails in his role, so too does American Man fail in his, considering the nearly inseparable link between being a soldier and being a man prevalent in mid-twentieth-century cultural norms. Though the anxiety of losing the established notion of martial-hence-masculine is quite evident in the science fiction films of the Cold War, it has of yet not received adequate attention.

The majority of film critics link alien invasions in Cold War science fiction films with Communist aggression and the geopolitical paranoia associated with it. While this approach has yielded valuable insights on many of the oppositions that structure these films, it tends to ignore the underlying gender dichotomy that makes this genre worthy of inclusion in critical gender studies. For instance, one of the most analyzed films of this period, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), is often cited as an obvious metaphor for the American paranoia of Communism. In *Body Snatchers*, the hero Dr. Miles J. Binnell proclaims that the pods from space are a cancer that is "taking us over, cell by cell," and also says that "it's a malignant disease spreading through the whole country!" It is easy to make the link between those lines and Adlai Stevenson's 1952 campaign speech in which he calls Communism "a disease which may have killed more people in this world than cancer, tuberculosis, and heart disease combined," and that the Soviets sought "total conquest, not merely of the earth, but of the human mind" (qtd. in Sayre

201). An even more blatant political allegory is found in *Red Planet Mars* (1952), which signals with its very title that the adversaries are from a "Red Planet," thus the "Red" nation of the Soviet Union. In this film, God himself uses Voice of America radio frequencies (established first as anti-Nazi and then anti-Communist propaganda media by the U.S.) to foment a peasants' revolt against the Soviet Union. These are but two examples in which Cold War science fiction films illustrate an economic, geopolitical anxiety, for as David Seed points out, "it is a truism to state that the Cold War was informed by a fear of the international Communist conspiracy" (132). The fact that nearly the entire second half of the twentieth century was dominated by the United States' political, economic, and military competition with the Soviet Union is not questioned. These science fiction films, as well as films of other genres produced during this period, certainly reflect this global friction, but ideological readings of these films should address not only nationality, but also gender.

Other critics see films like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* as illustrations of a fear of the mind-numbing social conformity so often associated with 1950s America. As Dr. Miles Binnell and the lead female character, girl-next-door Becky Driscoll, attempt to flee the pod creatures, they are running from what many perceived as an Eisenhower-era malaise of economically and socially enforced orthodoxy, as well as sexual and racial repression. In the film, the alien presence forces the protagonists to extinguish all traces of individuality in order to avoid detection and death, just as the pressures of complacency and conformity in Cold War America drove people to relinquish their individualities in an attempt to fit into middle-class, mainstream society.

Both the "Red Scare" and fear of conformity interpretations are interesting and valid, as are alternative readings of these films, such as Mark Jancovich's examination of these movies' confirmation of Fordist social, political, economic, and cultural regulations imposed upon Cold War America in his *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950s*. However, all these approaches feed into an overarching theme that seems to urge a reaffirmation of white, middle-class male domination of American culture and therefore the global (or universal, since science fiction extends beyond Earth's atmosphere) hegemony of the Warrior Male in the human hierarchy. So in addition to the collection of science fiction films most often addressed by critics of this genre—*War of the Worlds*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, and *The Day the Earth Stood Still* being the unofficial trilogy—an examination of a somewhat larger corpus of films will show that concerns over Communism, conformity, and Fordism are—at a more fundamental level—concerns over masculine identity.

Note that *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* was released during the presidential election year of 1956, when Americans went to the polls to reject intellectual Adlai Stevenson in favor of war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower for the second time in a row. Historian William B. Pickett describes Ike's first victory as "an outpouring of support for the most popular man in America—a beaming, genial five-star general, symbol of victory over Hitler in World War II" (xiv). Ike had promised to "go to Korea" if elected in 1952, and many Americans put him in office expecting him to end the war with a repeat of his World War II "D-Day" stratagem rather than through protracted diplomacy, as might be expected of his opponent. An article in the 1 December 1952 issue of *Life* magazine tells its readers that if "Adlai Stevenson were the president-elect now making

this trip [to Korea], the expectations of the American people would be tempered by knowing that it would be idle to expect too much from one so unversed in military affairs" (Murphy 51). 1950's American men were quite concerned with how they perceived their masculine identities, and these concerns manifested themselves both in science fiction films and in how they cast their ballots.

Though film critic Andrew Dowdy describes both the fictional invasion of the body-snatching alien pods and the 1956 election as "the Eisenhower blanket settling down . . . for four more years of undisturbed sleep" (167), the constituency may have instead been demonstrating a desire for a strong nation as well as stable gender identities by electing the definitive American military role model. In fact, before agreeing to run for the Republican presidential nomination the first time, Eisenhower resigned his civilian position as president of Columbia University and returned to uniformed, military service as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) in 1950. One could argue that just as Eisenhower recognized the political value of defining himself as the quintessential Warrior Male, so too did the majority of voting Americans perceive strong military leadership at the national level as a means to both international security and a return to stereotypical, pre-war gender roles. Though some may debate the motives of the American constituency that twice put Ike in the Oval Office in the fifties, it would be difficult indeed to separate the persona of President Eisenhower from the persona of General Eisenhower. Keeping the Warrior Male established in a socially dominant role will ease anxiety, they seem to be saying, though it turns out that that role itself may have been as imagined as any alien creature from Mars.

The legitimacy of those old roles is challenged in the post-war era. Traditional Warrior Males—as personified by President and former General of the Army Eisenhower—indeed bravely fought the Second World War with basically low-technology weapons and tremendous personal courage: their deeds recorded in history books and transmitted to succeeding generations through feature films. However, while many wished to nostalgically retain such heroes as potential saviors of the post-war world, Warrior Male could no longer ensure continued peace and prosperity in a technical world concurrently populated with intellectuals and scientists, personified by Stevenson, who were now coming to the forefront of public attention as they made obsolete both Warrior Male's weapons and his social status.

As American society began to question the viability of traditional male military figures that fought conventional wars with machine guns and tanks, it necessarily sought an alternative that could use technology without making the Warrior Male extinct. If guns and grenades were being trumped by rockets and atomic warheads, what place did Sergeant York have in a Buck Rogers world? Merely increasing the degree of technology used in battle was not always the answer. Science gave the military atomic weapons, but in doing so made the battlefield so dangerous that the traditional warrior's role was as obsolete as his weapons. Peter Biskind notes that in many science fiction films of the 1950s, "sometimes the government tried to destroy the aliens and failed, its weapons useless against their armor, whereupon they were destroyed by the resourceful citizens of Smallville without the benefit of federal aid" (117). He cites as examples *The Night the World Exploded* (1957), *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958), and *The Blob* (1958), wherein the creatures are defeated by water, a dog, and fire

extinguishers, respectively. Likewise, the combined armed forces of the world could not harm the invading Martians in *War of the Worlds* (1953), when a "litany of military hardware disintegrated in dazzling reds and yellows" (Saleh 93). In that film, the American military even tries an atomic bomb dropped from an experimental "flying wing" jet airplane, but to no avail. Instead, the creatures ultimately die due to their vulnerability to the bacteria ubiquitous in Earth's atmosphere, and as the survivors meekly emerge from the church where they had fatalistically awaited the end of humanity, they give thanks to God for sparing them. These diverse means of dispatching aliens illustrate both the anxiety people felt during this period as well as their various solutions to the menace. However, it is important to note that regardless of whether they resort to low-tech weapons, to natural biology, or to religious faith, the usual remedy for alien invasion is almost invariably regression to a paternalistic, hierarchical system.

Thus, Cold War-era science fiction films are vehicles that illustrate anxiety over the waning supremacy of traditional American military might due to rapidly advancing technology as well as the decline of middle-class, white, heterosexual American males as leading societal figures. Typically, when aliens invade the Earth in these movies, local law enforcement officers are often their first victims: their service revolvers and shotguns no match for the sophisticated weaponry of the invaders. Soon the military appears, but even its machine guns, bombers, and tanks prove likewise ineffectual. Often, some sort of specialist or scientist (often visual coded as foreign, effeminate, or both) is sent to dispatch the aliens with either new technology or a novel application of existing science—sometimes in a combined military-scientific effort and sometimes as

the solitary or lead agent. Though just as often the scientist himself is blamed for causing or allowing the invasion, or else his technical defense proves inadequate. Thus, we see that the relationships between soldiers and scientists as well as between men and women in these films are much more complex than can be contained in any simple formula. Additionally, they tend to change over the course of the decade, with allusions to impotency and deterioration of male social domination remaining constant and obvious. Though much has been written about 1950s' science fiction films as manifestations of the mid-century American perceived need for ever-present vigilance against Communism and resistance to social conformity and mindless consumerism, considering these films as vehicles of gender issues is perhaps most crucial in understanding the social impact of the 1950s.

Such films also depict an anxiety over the loss of traditional male occupations to women. When American women stepped forward to fill the ranks of industry and commerce left vacant as millions of men entered military service during World War II, they proved that they were as competent as their male counterparts. Whether assembling aircraft in a defense plant à la "Rosie the Riveter" or serving as both mother and father within the domicile while their husbands were overseas, American women began to demonstrate that they possessed labor and leadership capabilities on a par with those of men, but in doing so they damaged the fragile male ego and provided another perceived threat to the traditional borders of gender-coded behavior.

Just as the Atomic Genie seemed impossible to control once scientists had released it from the bottle, Empowered Woman was seen as unmanageable once she had been released by wartime necessity. In the first half of the twentieth century, films

depicting American fighting men engaged in traditional warfare with conventional weapons against human foes sharply delineated gender roles and transmitted the stereotypical role of Warrior Male to subsequent generations. However, the circumstances of total, global war required women as well as men to contribute to the war effort at unprecedented levels, resulting in significant slippage of those delineations. Historian K. A. Cuordileone states that the end of the Second World War "ushered in a heightened concern with national defense and an uneasy sense of vulnerability" as well as altered sexual relations for Americans (528). These altered relationships create what she calls a crisis in American masculinity, a crisis which emerged, at least in part, due to a perceived "unrestrained (female) sexuality and the rising tide of working women in the 1940s and 1950s—writ large during the war when women flooded into the labor force and experienced some relative autonomy" (528). As women took up building tanks and bombers, or even serving in the Women's Army Corps or similar organizations, men's traditional, gender-based roles and dominant status rightfully, though traumatically, eroded.

American men were willing to pay the price of freedom with their lives, but not so ready to pay the price of progress at the cost of their perceived notions of masculinity paid to this dual threat of science and women. For instance, there was a tremendous fear of male sterility due to exposure to radiation, as seen among the soldiers and sailors who participated in the 1950s A-bomb testing in America's Southwest deserts or aboard Navy ships in the Pacific Ocean (Hendershot 15). This dread of impotency due to invisible energy rays is evident in many 1950s' science fiction films, as the monsters that prove traditional phallic weaponry to be useless are spawned, mutated, or awakened by

atomic blasts—and often in the very same geographical locations where the United States military tested its early atomic weapons. Additionally, the marauding monsters that are unleashed or empowered due to atomic energy are often coded as female—with killing the queen or destroying the place where offspring are incubated the only hope to save the planet. Intellectual scientists and empowered women seem to conspire to threaten American manhood in these films.

Mere tangential participation in high-technology warfare could make even the soldiers and sailors themselves suspect and considered effeminate. In David Bradley's *No Place to Hide*, the author documents the resistance he encountered as he attempted to perform his radiation monitoring duties among sailors exposed to fallout at the Bikini Atoll tests. Bradley and the members of his Radiological Safety Section were regarded by the other sailors as "cranky old maids" who scuttled about with their Geiger counters, looking for dust in the cracks of the deck and in the folds of their bed linens and clothes. Military service was always considered a time when men could live apart from the domestic concerns of their mothers and wives, without someone constantly following behind them with dustpan and broom. But in this new Atomic Age, science had created a need for soldiers and sailors to serve as "housewives" whose duty it was to keep wardrooms and barracks spotless. Similarly, George B. Kistiakowsky, who served as chief of the Explosives Division at Los Alamos during the war years, notes a tendency among military men to label those concerned with the scientific aspects of bomb production and radiation monitoring as "effete" (qtd. in Hendershot, 41-2). This distrust of high technology, as well as questioning the masculinity of those connected with it, seems to have become ingrained in the post-war national psyche. Perhaps due to such

Atomic Age gender-coding, American science fiction films often present passive, possibly effeminate scientists creating high technology that yields side effects injurious to Warrior Males and their desired, but tenuous, status in society.

Perhaps the most obvious case of high technology causing male angst is found in *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957). In imitation of an actual 1946 incident in which the Japanese fishing boat *Lucky Dragon* was accidentally doused by fallout from the Bikini Atoll A-bomb tests, protagonist Scott Carey inadvertently sails his boat through some drifting atomic radiation. While the real crewmen gradually sickened and died, Carey reacts to radiation poisoning by beginning to shrink and is soon reduced to dollhouse scale. His alarmingly decreased stature is a metaphor for the shrinking power status that post-war men experienced as "promises made to him are broken one by one" (Faludi 30). These were promises made to Carey in return for his military service, for embracing the Warrior Male ethos. He is a veteran who came home to a GI Bill of Rights that should have guaranteed him all the things he ends up losing in the film: "The employer who was to give him lifetime economic security fires him. His wife, Louise, becomes his protector until he gets lost in the cellar of their house and she presumes he's been gobbled by their house cat . . . . And it turns out that the very source of his diminishment is implicitly a military atomic test by his own government" (Faludi 30). Science fiction once again shows the American male as rapidly losing his place in society, and it is due to the women and feminine-coded atomic scientists in the world who have denied men the opportunity to demonstrate male-coded behavior on the battlefield by rendering conventional arms useless in favor of high technology.

In spite of his diminutive stature and loss of control over his wife, Carey does attempt to maintain his status as Warrior Male. He demonstrates his masculine-coded ability to wield the phallus by fighting a spider that is many times his size. However, he must do this with one of his wife's sewing pins—stereotypically feminine-coded objects—as his makeshift spear. Though his size makes him insignificant to the world, Carey remains a heroic male-coded figure because he reverts to low-tech weaponry and engages in single combat with his enemy, proving that Warrior Male is not dependent upon modern scientists or their inventions. He only needs a sharp stick and upper body strength to prove his virility. However, this film ironically shows that though Carey has performed his masculine-coded rituals satisfactorily, circumstances forced him to do so with a feminine-coded prop—a significant reversal of traditional gender boundaries.

Science fiction films of the post-war era show that "once the specter of gender role reversal has been raised, however tacitly and quietly, the definition of women as persons who 'lack' something becomes a terrible void into which men themselves may fall, or be pushed" (Steffen-Fluhr 143). 1950s America began to realize that defining women merely as persons who lack the phallus and all the culturally associated privileges and status that accompany it falls short on two counts. First, World War II demonstrated quite convincingly and on a large scale that occupations outside the home and hierarchical positions of responsibility could indeed be successfully held by persons lacking phalluses. Second, the Atomic Age proved that simple possession of the phallus and the phallic weaponry of all the past centuries' war were no longer sufficient in a technologically advanced world to ensure social and political domination over one's opponents. This figurative emasculation was the "void" that men feared: the fact that

science and technology were erasing centuries of male control of others and the environment achieved through brute strength and an aptitude for low-tech tools and weapons. If men's identities and value were defined only by their tools and weapons, and if those devices proved worthless, then were not the men themselves likewise without identities and value in the post-war world? The social fallout created by women successfully moving into the previously male-dominated roles of head-of-household and bread-winner was conceptualized as a frightening, unanticipated byproduct of the Second World War, just as radiation was an unforeseen byproduct of atomic bombs. Though a cursory examination of these films would seem to indicate a simple bipolarity with a band of hypermasculine warriors on one side and a feminized scientific community on the other, the relationships between these groups is more complex, with characters sometimes migrating from one camp to another—cooperating with and even assuming traits and characteristics of the opposition. As the decade progresses, one can discern in these films a gradual dissolution of the previously distinct boundary between military and scientific factions, as well as between gender-coded characters.

Earlier, those engendered borders were perceived to be as evident as the battle lines drawn between the Allied and Axis forces during World War II. But when matinee enemies changed from Germans and Japanese to interplanetary aliens and mutated insects, the standard issue M-1 carbine and Sherman tank—along with the standard issue American G.I. himself—was no longer effective, as seen in the 1953 film *Invaders From Mars*. In this picture, a Martian flying saucer arrives on Earth, buries itself in a sand pit, and sucks unsuspecting humans down into the ground, where they are implanted with mind-controlling implants in the backs of their necks and released into the community.

The Martians use these implants to orchestrate sabotage against a top secret atomic rocket facility and then kill their human slaves with brain hemorrhages. Because some of their first victims are policemen, an Army general, and an engineer who is working on the rocket project for the military, no time is wasted in calling out the troops, and truckloads of soldiers and trainloads of tanks are mobilized.

However, before the corporate military can arrive in force, we see a failure of traditional masculine values. While waiting for the Army to arrive on the scene in force, one soldier—gruff-speaking Master Sergeant Rinaldi—becomes frustrated over the inability of officials to deal with the alien invaders and launches a one-man assault on the dug-in Martian position, thus performing the masculine ritual of the duel. While looking on, Colonel Fielding, Rinaldi's commander, mentions that he is a twenty-year Army veteran, but many people in the 1953 audience would have recognized him as a veteran of both the Second World War and Korea even without dialogue. Rinaldi's badges of rank and service stripes would have confirmed his status as a successful Warrior Male to audiences who, if not veterans themselves, probably had a veteran in the family or neighborhood. For when World War II ended just eight years earlier, over 12 million Americans had been serving in the armed forces when the population of the United States was only 140 million (O'Neill 1). These visual cues, along with his performance in the duel, firmly establish Rinaldi as a member of the conventional Warrior Male brotherhood.

In imitation of the heroic, self-sacrificing soldiers who charge enemy pillboxes and machinegun nests in earlier war films, Rinaldi grabs his rifle and, using the low-crawl method taught to soldiers in basic training ever since the First World War,

advances on the Martians. However, their presence is indicated in the first part of this film only by a hole—a void—in the shifting sand. Since he is not combating humans armed with rifles and machine guns but outer space aliens equipped with mysterious heat rays and mind-control devices, Rinaldi's charge is futile and the aliens suck him down into their sandy maelstrom where he is enslaved as the invader's spokesman. His attack fails not because Martians are immune to bullets, but because they present no clear target, no easily defined focus against which to direct traditional weapons. Prevented from performing the traditional role of warrior in a conventional battle scene, Rinaldi's charge becomes emblematic of male angst in a world where old reliable weapons, as well as old reliable male-coded behavior, truly are useless. In fact, the traditional warrior is subverted by the intellectual Martian—portrayed as a disembodied head with swelled cranial capacity—and forced to serve as a conduit for his insidious plot. Warrior Male, lacking obvious enemies against which to unleash his traditional arsenal of weapons and rituals, is useless.

Invaders From Mars also demonstrates that in addition to Martians, masculine-coded warriors in Cold War science fiction films also had another adversary to deal with: human scientists. Traditional masculinity, illustrated by the soldier character, is antithetical to traditional femininity, which is illustrated by the scientist figure. As mentioned earlier, science and technology are often portrayed as unleashing the beast, contributing to the demise of Warrior Male's potency by creating situations in which regular guys with regular tools and weapons are ineffectual. Hollywood's characterization of the scientific man also allows for this science-military tension to be interpreted as gender conflict. In *Monsters and Mad Scientists*, Andrew Tudor outlines

several elements that are fundamental to the mad scientist character in film. Among these are a intellectual who is obsessed with discovering the "secret of life itself," a monstrous creation which either intentionally or inadvertently threatens mankind, and an isolated laboratory in which the scientist performs his experiments apart from society at large (29). As in the obvious case of Dr. Frankenstein in a myriad of movies, an obsession with asexual reproduction and isolation from the external (read as "male") world set the scientist apart from the band of warrior males and make him suspect, demonstrating, as Tudor claims, "intimations of 'normal' versus 'abnormal' sexuality" (90). In other words, if he is a stereotypical scientist with lab coat and microscope, that man is excluded from the band of warriors dressed in military uniforms and armed with guns. If his interest lies in creating life in solitude with test tubes rather than through heterosexual intercourse, he cannot be a man. In 1950s science fiction films, being "normal" sexually and demonstrating the ability to wield the phallus seem to be necessary for proving masculinity, and the scientist fails to do so.

Take for example the case of Dr. William Wilson in *Invaders From Mars*. This scientist, upon learning that the Martians had kidnapped, brainwashed, and killed his daughter Cathy, seeks not revenge—vendetta being another established, expected masculine performance— but instead chooses to immerse himself in his work at the laboratory. Wilson's actions there are movie scientist clichés: pouring liquids from one test tube into another—activity that could easily be likened to feminine-coded dynamics of cooking. In this film, abrupt cuts between scenes further illustrate the dissimilarities between the masculine soldier and the feminine scientist. While hundreds of soldiers act in concert to fight the Martians in a outdoor, nighttime scene filled with smoke, noise,

and confusion, Dr. Wilson is alone in his sterile, brightly lit, silent laboratory. The warriors are sited in the external world of activity while the scientist in enclosed within the internal (even domestic) sphere of the feminine. The soldiers place themselves in mortal danger as they crawl in the dirt, shouting to each other over the noise of tanks and cannons firing. The scientist isolates himself in safety, serenely mixing chemicals in beakers and test tubes. Though it runs counter to the instinct of self-preservation, the expected masculine-coded behavior is to seek vengeance when a member of the perceived "weaker" group (here a young daughter) is killed. The "abnormal," feminine-coded activity is scientific investigation. However futile and absurd it may be, Rinaldi's charge is seen as preferable to Dr. Wilson's experiments.

The important conflict in these films, then, is not man-versus-monster but rather soldier-versus-scientist. Heterosexual, passionate, and aggressive American soldiers and asexual, sterile, and passive scientists live in disparate spheres until, as is the case in Cold War science fiction, something alien arrives to thrust these two dissimilar archetypes in close proximity. Passive male scientists can even be interpreted as female poseurs—men with confused gender identity who seek to create and nurture life as stereotypical women do rather than fight and destroy life as stereotypical men do.

For instance, in *The Thing from Another World* (1951), the main human antagonist, the scientist Dr. Carrington, is suspicious on several counts. Sporting a goatee, a double-breasted blazer, and a decidedly Russian-looking fur hat, he is visually coded as foreign and quite possibly Communist. When first summoned to investigate the mysterious structure that will later prove to be the alien's spaceship, the film's masculine hero, Air Force Captain Pat Hendry, suspects that the magnetic disturbances

detected in the Arctic could be of Russian origin, since "they're all over the pole, like flies." While "Red Scares" were very much a part of American life in the 1950s and characterizing Cold War movie villains as Communists is widespread, it is more important to note that Carrington also becomes coded as effeminate or even homosexual. At that time, many made the illogical but politically popular connection between economics and sexuality. For instance, from July of 1956 until July of 1965, Florida State Senator Charley Eugene Johns led a special joint committee that investigated allegations that Communists and homosexuals—making no real distinctions between those two groups—were corrupting higher education in the state, most insidiously at the University of Florida. On a national level, legendary Commie hunter Senator Joseph McCarthy put it quite crudely when he confided to some reporters, "If you want to be against McCarthy, boys, you've got to be either a Communist or a cocksucker" (qtd. in Cuordileone 521). More elegantly, Robert J. Corber points out that many early Cold War literary critics fed that delusion. Lionel Trilling and Richard Chase, for example, equated left-wing politics with homosexuality and posited both predilections as dire national security risks. "In the 1950s," writes Corber, "both Communism and homosexuality were generally considered immature forms of heterosexuality in which the Communist or the homosexual remained fixated on the mother" (166). It is this perceived fixation on the mother—on being the mother, actually—which makes Dr. Carrington the true villain in this film. As Norman Bates later demonstrates in Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), men who cross gender-coded lines of appearance or performance are often sources of male angst and narrative conflict.

Initially, the characters in *The Thing* are arranged into two distinctly oppositional groups: masculine warriors (championed by Captain Hendry) and feminine scientists (led by Dr. Carrington). The masculine group consists mainly of the Air Force flyers, but includes others who demonstrate stereotypical male behavior. Scotty, a newspaper reporter, is allowed in the masculine camp since he plays poker in the Officer's Club; was a war correspondent during the battles of El Alamein, Bougainville, and Okinawa; and has a reputation for randy, heterosexual activity while stationed with some of the other flyers at Accra. The civilian radio operator enters the male warrior circle through coding that links him to the masculine cowboy archetype of Western films: he speaks with a drawl, wears denim and plaids, rolls his own cigarettes, and his nickname is "Tex." Contrasted with this band of brothers are the feminized characters: Dr. Carrington, other civilian scientists, Carrington's attractive secretary Nikki (who is also the love interest for Captain Hendry), the wife of one of the scientists, and the local Aleut cooks. Though male, the Aleuts are firmly contained within the feminized group, being employed in perhaps the most domestic of occupations. In fact, they disappear from the film after only a brief appearance that helps establish the dichotomy of the two groups. When the military men arrive at the Arctic outpost, the polar scientists are engaged in decidedly feminine activities: setting tables and preparing supper. Sharply contrasted with the earlier interior scene of the smoky Officer's Club furnished with manly poker tables and bar stools, the outpost's dining hall is decidedly domesticated and feminized, with china place settings and folded napkins. Reporter Scotty even remarks that it "looks like 'My Old Kentucky Home' in here!" These disparities, thinly

disguised as soldier versus scientist, set up the film's true conflict: a competition between genders.

Throughout the picture, whenever these groups appear in the same scene the female and feminized characters are almost always flanked on both sides by members of the masculine group, containing them visually as well as restricting their actions. This positioning serves as a quenching device to contain the human antagonists and keep narrative conflict to a minimum until the Thing begins its rampage. When finally presented with a tangible, targetable enemy, the Warrior Males regain their social primacy while most of the female and feminine characters either disappear from the scenes or subserviently switch their allegiance to the male group. Even ultra-feminine Nikki dons a blouse obviously styled after the popular military "Ike jacket" and enters the male circle of confidence—through the ruse of bringing them coffee—by proposing valid suggestions as to how to defeat the animated vegetable Thing. As if quoting from *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, a perennial best-seller since it was introduced in 1950, Nikki suggests that they "boil it, stew it, bake it, fry it!" Perhaps surprisingly, her feminine, domestic suggestions ultimately prove successful. Though her contributions to the group create some dissolution of gender-role barriers, she is excluded from the climatic battle scene, it being strictly a men-only affair. Nikki temporarily crosses over into the masculine warrior sphere with her "cooking tips," but retains her "permanent" feminine gender identity through her submission to "permanently" male-coded activities: she serves the men coffee while they plan battle strategies, she retreats to a safe, interior position when ordered to so as not to interfere or distract the men during the big fight, and she even agrees to abandon her career to marry Hendry and follow him in his

military career. Dr. Carrington, however, maintains his "permanent" status as an independent-thinking, feminized scientist character throughout the film, and for this social transgression he remains more sinister than the alien.

As mentioned earlier, it is Carrington's maternal performance that labels him such a deviant from "normal" male groups. While the "real" men are combing the Arctic compound for the Thing, intent on killing it, Dr. Carrington subverts the masculine consensus by secretly nourishing the alien's offspring in the greenhouse by giving them plasma from the expedition's medical stores. Fed through tubes that are very much like umbilical cords, the alien pods make noises "almost like the wail of a newborn child that's hungry." When Nikki tips off Captain Hendry that Dr. Carrington is hiding the Thing's offspring in the greenhouse (another of her movements across gender-coded barriers), he and his band of armed men—which now includes the civilian scientists who have set aside their clinical interests and are reasserting their masculinity by helping find and kill the monster—search for the creatures until one of them locates the blood-nursing pods and announces, "Here's the nursery, Pat." Clearly, Carrington is acting as a surrogate mother, activity that blurs traditional gender roles, contributes to male anxiety, and reinforces his position as the real source of conflict in this film.

Carrington displays other feminine traits in contrast to the masculine activities of the military characters. In the climatic confrontation between men and monster, Carrington nearly foils the military men's elaborate electrical ambush when he switches off the power generator and rushes up to the Thing in an attempt to establish a dialogue. "All I want is a chance to communicate with it," he says as he expresses his desire to engage in what has stereotypically become connected with the feminine: talking things

out rather than fighting. "Listen, I'm your friend," Carrington pleads to the Thing, "I have no weapons . . . I'm a scientist!" Though reproductively asexual, this monster is evidently "male" in the sense of showing a proclivity towards violence and disdain towards pacifists. Perhaps repulsed by Carrington's effeminate manner and gender-crossing tendencies, the Thing backhands him to the floor in a gesture that shows Carrington is not fit to participate in the final duel: ritualized combat is reserved for "real" men.

Similarly, in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), the characters square off in gender-based enclaves. In this film, the alien scientist Klaatu brings a dire warning to the people of Earth: cease development of atomic weapons and long-range rocketry or face total annihilation from the robot-policeman Gort. As the film progresses, the demarcation between the two opposing factions becomes obvious. On one side are the members of occupations then reserved exclusively for males: politicians, soldiers, and businessmen. They reject Klaatu's warning and see him as a threat both to the Earth and to their gender-based social standings. Since those threats must be contained, they imprison Klaatu in Walter Reed Army Hospital, later in an actual jail cell, while Gort is encased in a futuristic plastic tomb. On the other side are war widow Helen Benson, her son Bobby, the physicist Dr. Barnhardt, and an international ensemble of other scientists who all rally to Klaatu's words as a peaceful, science-based solution to the arms race. Since this feminized side of the opposition advocates the abolition of phallic atomic weaponry—rockets and bombs—and since conventional weapons like pistols and machine guns prove ineffectual against Klaatu's technology and regenerative powers, it is perceived as a threat to Male Warrior's physical and martial control of the world.

Again, the central conflict in this Cold War film is masculine versus feminine rather than U.S.S.R. versus U.S., though there is plenty of both overt and implied mention of that geopolitical conflict.

Though science fiction films of the Cold War era often demonstrate clear delineation along gender-coded lines, metaphorically pitting the military against scientists, they also exhibit the ability of those two factions to work in tandem against a common threat, blurring the engendered boundaries previously held sacrosanct. Such cooperation is enabled, however, only if all the characters engage in male-coded activity and assume the role of Warrior Male in accordance with pre-Cold War standards. For example, in *Them!* (1954), we find that full cooperation among masculine-coded characters and containment of feminine-coded characters result in effective elimination of the threat. In this film, the atomic bomb tests at Alamogordo in 1945 inadvertently create a mutated race of giant ants. Since this action happened nine years before the film's chronology begins, feminine-coded, high-technology scientists do not actually appear in this narrative. The threat is already present; the question is how to contain the ants and return the world to a pre-atomic situation.

Regardless of origin, the monsters in this movie are definitely anti-male in their actions. Off-screen atomic scientists inadvertently empowered a matriarchal society of ants, and the ants seem intent on destroying the patriarchal status quo, as evinced by their early kills. The two policemen investigating the strange happenings out in the desert first discover that a camping trailer had been torn open and the father of a vacationing family killed, his young daughter allowed to live. But the dead man happens to be a FBI agent, and so the policemen regard his death as especially odious.

Not only was a Federal law enforcement officer murdered, but that murder was also an attack on the patriarchal government he represented and on American manhood in general. The policemen then find the ruins of Gramps Johnson's General Store. Gramps never had a chance against the giant ants. They find his shotgun bent and useless. One policeman stays behind at the store while the other goes to make his report, and he too falls victim to the creatures as he squeezes off a few futile shots from his service revolver. Clearly, traditional Warrior Males—whose professions directly involve the ability to wield the phallus—are the targets of the mutant ants and thus the ants present the direst of threats.

Therefore, the Warrior Male coalition formed to exterminate them is perhaps the most inclusive of any science fiction film: the surviving policeman, another FBI agent, a father-daughter team of myrmecologists (ant specialists) from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and an Army general with his platoons of soldiers band together in a nearly seamless partnership devoid of internal tension. This lack of tension is due to a dearth of characters placed in opposition to the masculine clique. All the male characters—regardless of profession—appear to be interchangeable, as they all seem to instinctively know police investigative procedures, how to talk on military radios, and how to load and fire bazookas. Perhaps signaling that all these men have military training, since being a veteran was a much more common condition in 1954 than it is today, or perhaps signaling the innate ability of "true" men to master low-tech, male-coded props, their interchangeability and willing cooperation also make them a match for the corporate hive mentality of the ants they face. Even the FBI agent and the female scientist don Army-issue fatigues and steel helmets, melding into the phalanx of regular Army

soldiers as they descend into Los Angeles' sewer system for the climatic battle against the ants. That female scientist poses no threat to the male coalition since she readily contains her femininity with male clothing, in contrast to her first appearance early in the film where her skirt catches on a plane's boarding ladder and her leg is bared to mid-thigh. Even her name, Pat, allows for easy conversion into the male sphere of action. The only other women characters in this film not part of a screaming, panicking mob remain within the traditional feminine sphere of action, serving to swell the scenes as a grieving mother or child-care giving pediatrician. Contributory to the film in only minor ways, women remain behind engendered barriers.

Similarly, in the climatic battle in *Them!* we see that though science and the military can work together under extreme circumstances, the military's position is still clearly dominant in such ad hoc relationships. Science contributes to the final battle only tangentially, advising to specifically target female ants and supplying "gas bombs" (nothing more high-tech than aerosol insecticide) to stun the creatures while soldiers do the actual killing with their traditional, pre-Cold War machine guns, flame-throwers, and bazookas. *Them!* gives us a scenario wherein the world is saved by traditional Warrior Males wielding conventional weapons and organized in a unified, male-dominated, military hierarchy. The return to pre-Cold War conditions, with men returned to their previously unquestioned positions of authority, has been accomplished and the world is better off for it. The feminized high-tech scientists usually found in contention with male-coded soldiers are absent in this science fiction film, helping prove that they are indeed the creators of both monsters and male angst in the 1950s.

The lesser-known film *It Conquered the World* (1956) also demonstrates that science fiction movies of this period often pitted scientists against the military, but also that the distinctions between characters were beginning to become less defined by occupation and more by gender coding. In this film, there are both positive and negative military and scientific characters, but regardless of their vocations, their relative social merit is determined by membership in the gender-coded science-or-military binary. In *It Conquered the World*, scientist Dr. Tom Anderson (played by perpetual movie villain Lee Van Cleef, whom audiences would have recognized as one of the henchmen in the popular 1952 film *High Noon*) attempts to persuade military and government officials to call off what would be the world's first satellite launch. In 1956, the Soviet Union had not yet launched *Sputnik*, so international competition for bragging rights to that achievement was tight, and national pride was at stake for both superpowers. Anderson pleads that science should not be used for potentially military causes, using the fact that he had worked on both the "Manhattan Project during War Two" [sic] and the "Perpetual Missile Program" as his Warrior Male credentials. However, his attempt at penetrating the masculine clique in order to stop their stereotypically aggressive male behavior fails. Evidently, both Army General Carpenter and "U. S. Secretary" Platt are bewildered as to why Dr. Anderson would want to halt their satellite project, since participating in aggressive competition is a crucial component of their definition of manhood, especially when rocket launches and "conquest" of space was one arena in which masculine prowess could be flaunted during the Cold War. His mislabeling of World War II does not add to his male cachet, either.

Dr. Anderson refuses to participate in another sort of conquest that would have allowed him admission into the Warrior Male camp: he avoids heterosexual coitus in favor of scientific pursuits. He rejects the amorous advances of his beautiful blonde wife in order to sit up late at night alone, talking to aliens from Venus on his short-wave radio set. "It's true I am your only friend," Anderson says to the Venusians in what could be described as a lover's voice, "Nobody else even knows you exist!" Viewers today may be struck at the similarities between Dr. Anderson's conversations and the current practice of phone- or internet-sex. In both cases, technophiles abandon flesh-and-blood mates for sterile, electronic relationships. Anderson's avoidance of "normal" sex, along with his desire to thwart male-coded projects like rocket launches, places him firmly in the feminized scientific community and, true to Tudor's model, Anderson's self-imposed isolation from sexuality in pursuit of scientific learning identifies him as the villain in the film. As Dr. Wilson avoids human contact in *Invaders From Mars*, Dr. Anderson chooses alien discourse over human intercourse. And as Dr. Carrington's feminine-coded behavior makes him the target of male-coded antipathy in *The Thing*, Dr. Anderson's behavior places him outside of the masculine-coded warrior group.

Additionally, like Dr. Carrington in *The Thing*, Anderson's facial hair—in this case a dark mustache—sets him apart from the clean-shaven soldiers and "good-guy" scientists: here gender and racial coding intersect to keep Anderson apart from the white, male, middle-class Cold War consensus. Anderson's olive complexion and dark, curly, oiled hair would have also reminded audiences of the stock 1950s "greaser" character: an urban Latino inclined toward thievery, hot rods, and knife fights as depicted in popular films such as *Blackboard Jungle* (1955). Helping form the greaser connection

in the audience's mind is the presence of a negative soldier character, Private Manuel Ortiz. Sporting a pencil-thin mustache and speaking with a distinctly Spanish accent, he is a Latino version of Beetle Bailey or Sad Sack: he leans on his rifle and reads comic books when he is on sentry duty, keeps half-eaten bananas in his uniform shirt pocket, and comically mishandles and trips over his own rifle. Additionally, neither Anderson nor Ortiz are capable of wielding the phallus, as demonstrated by their inability to control their weapons. Ortiz is dangerously casual with his rifle, even to the point of accidentally aiming it at his First Sergeant's head. Ultimately, his lack of weapons expertise results in his rifle jamming at a critical point in the final battle and the alien kills him. Claire Anderson, Tom's spurned wife, actually steals the scientist's rifle and attempts to use it against the Venusian monster, his radio-sex partner, but she also dies in her attempt at wielding the phallus. Tom Anderson and Manuel Ortiz, one a scientist and one a soldier, are both excluded from white, male, middle-class hero status. In fact, they are excluded even from manhood itself. These characters establish in this film the presumptions that one can categorize people through racial appearances and that one can exclude them from "maleness" through their ineptness with stereotypical male activities such as handling firearms. These presumptions help establish the hero in *It Conquered the World*: Dr. Paul Nelson.

Since Nelson is himself a scientist, one might initially tend to place him in the non- or even anti-male group. However, in a variance in the soldier-scientist conflict, Nelson is indeed coded as an all-American male due to his physical features, his perceived "normal" relationship with his wife, and his ability to deal with male-coded props. Played by Peter Graves, Nelson's blond good looks immediately distinguish him

visually from the swarthy Anderson, and aspects of the film's *mise-en-scene* highlight this distinction. Hard sidelights usually manage to keep Anderson's face half hidden in attached shadows, the resulting chiaroscuro making his strong facial contours appear even more sinister. Nelson, on the other hand, is bathed in flattering frontal light that accentuates his handsome face, sometimes to the point of saintly luminosity. The contrast is unmistakable and leads the viewer to make instant judgements about these characters.

In addition to his visual coding as protagonist, Nelson also repeatedly demonstrates expected male performance. The interaction and dialogue between Nelson and his wife, Joan, implies that they enjoy a "normal" heterosexual relationship, in sharp contrast to the "perverted" marriage of the Andersons. When ordered to stay inside their home while he goes out to battle the alien, Joan instantly obeys her husband, indicating that Paul is indeed the head of that household. Claire, however, is constantly nagging Tom to behave more like a man and remain loyal to the government-military coalition sponsoring the satellite project and to break off his radio contact with Venus. Paul, the true Warrior Male, has no such conflicts with his spouse; he remains firmly in control. In fact, he even ends up shooting Joan after discovering that she too had fallen under the control of the alien. In more ways than one, Paul Nelson proves his ability to wield the phallus and control women.

Indeed, Nelson's prowess with a Colt .45 automatic pistol (which he managed to take from an Army officer who had succumbed to the invader's mind-control) is phenomenal. At one point he simultaneously beats two scientists and a soldier to the draw and plugs them with a bullet apiece—a feat that would elevate any man to hero

status in any war, detective, or western film. He has no difficulty mastering other types of military equipment either, being able to drive his Buick convertible or an Army jeep with equal aplomb. In fact, the very possession of a sporty car helps define him as a masculine character who has bought into—both literally and figuratively—the notion of American male as consumer. If masculinity is defined by the type and amount of goods one owns, then Nelson displays acceptable levels of Fordist behavior. So in spite of his stated occupation as a scientist, visual cues and his male-coded actions define Nelson as a Warrior Male who is capable of defending the nation, the planet, and masculine domination over the feminine.

Ultimately, scientist Tom Anderson realizes the error of his ways and—in a second, more desperate attempt to enter the clan of Warrior Males—teams up with the soldiers fighting the monster with conventional pistols, rifles, and bayonets. Having neither time nor equipment sufficient to devise a technological defense against the alien, Anderson decides on a low-tech solution: he lights a gasoline blowtorch and makes a suicidal one-man charge against the monster. After Anderson expresses a few words of regret, he and the Venusian both fall to the ground dead, locked in a lover's embrace. As the camera cuts between shots of all those killed because of Anderson's collusion with the alien and widens out to a shot of the Earth from space, we hear Dr. Nelson's voice telling us that our only hope for the future comes "from within the man himself." In the case of this 1956 film, the term "man" is definitely <u>not</u> inclusive of all genders and sexualities. The feminine—to include those men who embrace Venus in lieu of Mars—is the cause of global conflict, not the solution. Tom Anderson learns too late that his bombs and missiles cause more problems than they solve. High technology, especially

atomic energy as devised by the feminine-coded scientists in these Cold War science fiction films, was as big a threat to male social domination as were women. So, as gender emerged as the true source of conflict, there was less of a need to prove the superiority of the military over science.

In fact, science fiction films in the latter part of the 1950s often depicted soldiers in supporting roles to scientists. Take for example the 1957 monster movie *The Black Scorpion*, obviously influenced by the earlier *Them*! and perhaps inspired by the eruption of the Paricutin Volcano in Michoacan, Mexico, which spewed forth lava and ash from 1943 until 1952. In this film, American geologist Hank Scott and Mexican geologist Artur Ramos set out to examine recent volcanic activity in Mexico that, they later learn, has unleashed a swarm of giant scorpions from underground caverns. Though ostensibly men of science, they are coded as being quite masculine through the usual visual cues. Being field rather than laboratory scientists, they wear dusty, sweat-stained outdoor clothing—khaki pants and denim shirts—instead of sterile white lab coats. They drive a military surplus jeep, wear cowboy-style bandannas and hats, drink from canteens, and carry pistols in their waistbands. Immediately, the audience begins to make the assumption that these are truly stereotypical "men," and that assumption is confirmed as soon as they begin speaking. "There she is!" says Scott as soon as he sees the volcano for the first time, indicating that the object of their examination and conquest is feminine. Additionally, when Ramos asks how Scott so easily obtained permission to go on this expedition, it turns out that he seduced the Mexican secretary whose office handles such bureaucracy. "But I didn't use Spanish on her," Scott boasts to an approving Ramos, "it was sign language!" Scott's near-ignorance of Spanish, in spite of

the fact that he has chosen to work in Mexico, also demonstrates a white, middle-class disdain for the Latino, as seen earlier in *It Conquered the World.* Add to this the romantic subplot of Scott's relationship with Teresa Alverez, a beautiful woman whose ranch he helps save and later proposes to marry, and it becomes clear that though he is a scientist, American Doctor Scott is definitely a member of the Warrior Male clan, with Mexican Doctor Ramos an almost-honorary member.

Other instances of gender-coded boundaries beginning to slip appear in the characters of Dr. Jose de la Cruz, the local scientist who lives in the town of San Lorenzo where the majority of monster trouble originates, and Dr. Velazco, an important specialist from Mexico City. At first glance, one would be tempted to label Dr. de la Cruz a stereotypical science fiction movie scientist. He wears the standard white coat in a laboratory filled with de rigueur racks of beakers and test tubes, confined to a feminized "kitchen" interior, never venturing beyond the doors of that lab. Sporting a full beard and mustache, he would seem to be more like Dr. Carrington in *The Thing* or Dr. Anderson in *It Conquered the World*, with all such hirsute laboratory technicians existing outside the masculine group. However, Ramos and Scott soon learn that he enjoys a bracer of tequila during his "coffee breaks." Dr. de la Cruz's participation in the male-coded ritual of alcohol drinking proves that he is as much a regular guy as are the geologists, and so they welcome him into the Warrior Male group with hearty chuckles and some male-bonding back slapping.

If the character of Dr. de la Cruz a opens a fissure in the solider-scientist gender-coded barrier, the character of Dr. Velazco absolutely shatters the stereotyped, feminized scientist model usually seen in science fiction films of the first half of the 1950s. Since

Velazco is clearly a man in charge of all those around him, the Mexican government sends him to San Lorenzo to direct the rescue efforts there, placing him in command of even the senior army officer, Major Cosio. When the composite band of Male Warriors first rides out to do battle against the giant scorpions, they are led by Drs. Scott, Ramos, and Velazco in the geologists' jeep, followed by Major Cosio's tanks and trucks, with an assortment of civilian construction equipment bringing up the rear. Major Cosio even deploys his troops in accordance with Dr. Velazco's commands, accepting his authority and leadership without question or hesitation. Thus we see not only full cooperation between science and the military, but also that science has risen to a dominant position within the sphere of masculine activity.

Additionally, there is no implication that feminine-coded science causes the giant scorpion invasion. In fact, being a scientist in this film has risen to the status of acceptable manly behavior. Detonation of atomic bombs—the epitome of high-tech science for the 1950s—or pursuit of scientific goals at the expense of human lives are quite often the source of mutated or unleashed monsters. But in *The Black Scorpion*, it is the natural disaster of a volcanic eruption that releases this particular menace. There is little tension between the sexes, either. Teresa Alverez is receptive towards Hank Scott's romantic overtures and, even though she demonstrates her ability to run the cattle ranch as profitably as her father had, she is quite willing to abandon her Mexican hacienda and financial independence just to marry the American geologist. Thus freed from distractions—either feminine or feminine-coded—Scott and the other men are unencumbered in their mission to fight the giant scorpion.

As the film reaches its climax, we see once again that scientists and soldiers—provided they are all men—are not only interchangeable, but that the scientist is even the superior paradigm for male-coded behavior. Supplied with an electrified harpoon gun by Dr. Velazco, Scott and Ramos join Major Cosio in Mexico City's municipal stadium—the site of manly sports like bullfighting and football—to meet the sole remaining scorpion for the climactic battle. Even though they come to this fight in sweater vests and ties instead of military uniforms or field clothes, the geologists prove their masculinity by adroitly wielding the phallic, monster-destroying weapon after Cosio takes his best shot with it and misses. In fact, while retrieving the electric harpoon for a second attempt, the major is electrocuted by the very weapon science provides him—he grabs the business end while the power is still on—and thus it is up to the scientists to kill the scorpion while the army's role is relegated to using its conventional tanks, helicopters, and cannons as mere diversionary ploys to distract the monster while scientists do the real work.

As we see in this late 50s film, the army is now subordinate to science, a sea change from earlier films of the genre, but perhaps a premonition of things to come for the Warrior Male. It seems to indicate that the "Golden Age" of proving masculinity through armed aggression is indeed irretrievably past, that new paradigms of manhood need to be developed or, more drastically, that gender definitions be abandoned altogether. Just as the conflict between soldier and scientist gradually disappears from these films, so too does the need to assert domination of male-coded identities over feminine-coded ones. The enemy becomes external to human society rather than internal as the focus of action shifts from differences of opinion between oppositional

groups of people to humans fighting monsters. In the earlier films *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *The Thing From Another World* (both 1951), narrative tension ostensibly centers around what to do about alien invaders, but in actuality the focus is on definitions of gender-based roles. Should people of earth heed Klaatu's warnings or just shoot him? Should they preserve the Thing for scientific study or reduce him to a pile of smoking ash? Even as late as 1956, in the film *It Conquered the Earth*, at least one scientist (though he later changed his opinion) sought to welcome an alien invader while the rest of the community sought to repel it. But, as we see in later films such as *Them!* and *The Black Scorpion*, no one—neither scientist nor soldier—makes any attempts to appease or protect the invading monsters. Everyone realizes that they must be destroyed, and the narrative tension comes not from asking *if* they should be killed, but rather *how quickly* can they be killed?

Thus, American science fiction films in the early 1950s do indeed reflect a perceived crisis in American manhood. Though some interpret these films as warnings against Communism, consumerism, or mid-century complacency, they in fact illustrate that science and technology and empowered women were often considered conspiratorial partners bent on unseating men from their traditional, pre-Cold War positions of authority and social primacy. The traditional performative role of the Warrior Male was shaken by a deep-seated sense of insecurity brought about by technological developments in warfare and social changes in regard to the role of women and their level of participation in previously male-exclusive venues. Prevented from demonstrating masculine virility in the traditional arena of armed conflict, the American Warrior Male was often forced to yield authority and power to scientists, who were often

portrayed as effeminate and even the original cause of whatever dilemma society was facing. Similarly, when confronted with the fact that women could easily succeed in roles previously reserved for men, many men perceived a threat to their dominant status as breadwinners due to women exceeding their traditional, gender-defined boundaries. Such perceived dangers are presented metaphorically in 1950s science fiction films as alien invaders or mutated insects which must be confronted by men who present appropriately masculine façades and demonstrate adequate mastery of male-coded behavior. Additionally, the Warrior Male is usually shown as being very much in conflict with the scientist, as science and technology are depicted as rendering the Warrior Male obsolete.

However, as it becomes clear that cooperation between the military and scientific communities is vital for national survival in the high-technology post-war world, a new version of the Warrior Male—one who masters the complexities of science rather than rejecting the dramatic changes it presents—becomes the new paradigm for Cold War American manhood. This new model combines the traditional vestiges of Warrior Male attributes and behaviors with aspects of the previously disparaged scientist, as well as adding a touch of the domesticated family man. Such a creature, which could compete for and win national honor and supremacy in the Cold War geopolitical arena, was then offered to American youth as a role model for the future. Thus, in children's literature of the 1950s and early 1960s, we see presented a prototype of idealized American masculinity in the figure of the Mercury Project astronaut.

CHAPTER 4
SAVIOR IN A SPACE SUIT:
THE ASTRONAUT IN COLD WAR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Competing for popularity with science fiction films in the years after World War Two was the genre of the Western, including such notable films as *My Darling Clementine* (1946), *Fort Apache* (1948), *Red River* (1948), *High Noon* (1952), *Shane* (1953), and *The Searchers* (1956). Such post-war Westerns, as Michael T. Marsden points out in "Savior in the Saddle"—the article that lends this chapter its title—often depict a heroic cowboy, cavalry officer, or sheriff as the Warrior Male savior of a community that is beset by bandits, rustlers, Indians, or other impediments to Manifest Destiny's westward expansion. As Marsden describes him, the "Sagebrush Savior" must "ride tall, shoot straight, and remain eternally vigilant for the causes of right," as well as be "ever ready to sweep down on the evil towns and destroy them so they can be rebuilt to house families and civilizations and the dreams of men" (100). Such attributes also apply to the military heroes of the Second World War, who swept through North Africa, Western Europe, and the Pacific Islands to rid the towns of the Axis oppressors who stood in opposition to Democracy.

However, just as science fiction films of the 1950s illustrate the American military man as ineffectual, so too does the Western and its six-gun-slinging Messiah gradually lose applicability in the Atomic Age. The continued popularity of the conventional war film and the Western is perhaps due to nostalgia for a time when

steely-eyed Warrior Males solved all of society's problems with gunpowder and lead bullets rather than with rocket fuel and atomic bombs. With the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik in October of 1957, many Americans yearned for a male archetype that would deliver their communities not from Nazis, Martians, or banditos, but from Communism and the perceived disadvantage America faced with the so-called "missile gap." Such an archetype would emerge in the figure of the Mercury Program astronaut, a composite figure that embodies the best attributes of the soldier, scientist, and domestic man in a new space-age role model. Perhaps the best illustrations of such characters are found in children's nonfiction space and science literature of the period, which also presents this new masculine paradigm as the means to perpetuate both national identity and male hegemony in Cold War America.

The astronaut was to be America's new masculine savior—not in a ten-gallon hat or battlefield khakis but in a shiny silver spacesuit—taming the threats of science and technology, asserting America's role as a superpower, and reinstating the social status of the Warrior Male. Though the corpus has been largely ignored for quite some time, children's nonfiction space-oriented literature from the 1950s and early 1960s demonstrates a widespread tendency to posit the Warrior Male ethos as dominant in the new arena of space exploration. Close readings of these texts provide useful insight as to how American youth is introduced to the space race during the height of the Cold War and how these texts are targeted primarily towards boys, further attempting to solidify the social dominance of the Warrior Male as these aspiring astronauts girded themselves not with swords or pistols but with slide rules and pocket protectors. These books were nearly ubiquitous in Cold War homes, schools, and libraries, thus playing an important

function in shaping American perceptions of masculinity well into the twentieth-first century. During this same period, articles in *Life* magazine—which had an exclusive contract with the original Mercury astronauts and NASA and ran astronaut stories in twenty-eight issues between 1959 and 1963—and in *Collier's* eight-part "Man Will Conquer Space Soon" series which began with the 22 March 1952 issue, present this new masculine paradigm of soldier-scientist-family man to adults (McCurdy 38, 90). Likewise, children's space literature of that same period socializes the younger generation into a masculinity that is at once traditional and innovative. The primary function of this form of literature is to dissipate Warrior Male anxiety over science and replace it with a Warrior Male mastery over science.

Aside from children's literature, one early attempt at reconciling the Warrior Male with science is the relatively obscure film *The Fearmakers* (1958). In the opening scenes of this film, the audience witnesses the protagonist, Army Captain Alan Eaton, being savagely beaten by his jailers in a North Korean prisoner of war camp. Suddenly freed and thrust back across the 38th Parallel, Eaton stands bewildered in his dirty, ragged scraps of uniform, becoming an obvious metaphor for the collected American Armed Forces of 1953: humiliated, emasculated, and similarly bewildered by its inability to perform in the traditional role of heroic Warrior Male. Though decisively victorious less than a decade before in 1945 (Captain Eaton is a decorated World War II vet who was recalled to active duty during Korea), America's military was incapable of repeating in 1950-53 the successful masculine performances it had in 1941-45. In spite of the medals on his uniform that bespeak former military glories, Eaton is dismissed as a "brainwashed psycho," powerless to protect himself, his new female love-interest, or

even his business from danger in the Cold War world. Post-traumatic stress syndrome (though not diagnosed as such in 1958) leaves him with sporadic migraines and fainting spells that allow the villains to gain advantages over him, disarm him, and imperil his life and the life of the film's heroine.

Ostensibly, the root cause of Eaton's problems is Communism: Eaton is tortured by Communists during the war and then returns home to find his business partner murdered and their public relations firm taken over by a Communist front organization. Clues in the film, though, indicate that science and its incompatibility with the military is the actual underlying source of friction. Flying home on a commercial airliner not long after his release from the prisoner of war camp, Eaton finds himself drawn into a conversation with nuclear physicist Dr. Gregory Jessup. Jessup mentions that "the military and the sciences are closer together today than ever before, I'm sorry to say." In spite of Eaton's protestations, Jessup continues, saying that atomic power in the hands of the military "has brought us to the brink of world extermination" and that he is working towards "ending the nuclear arms race and calling a halt to the military invading our field of science." Such sentiments echo a pervading dilemma throughout the Cold War: atomic weapons give militaries enormous powers of mass destruction while at the same time make them nearly incapable of using them. Science and the military seem at irreconcilable odds, and this stalemate creates a national malaise among its males.

What makes *The Fearmakers* unique and especially applicable to this study is the fact that the protagonist triumphs in the film's resolution when he becomes a prototype of what will become the new heroic figure for the Cold War: a viable combination of soldier and scientist. Admittedly, it is a rather mundane branch of

science—statistics—that Captain Eaton's character adds to his established warrior persona to create a nascent version of the post-Korea Warrior Male. Nevertheless, in this film we see a small spark of hope that the American public will indeed find a new heroic model that will reconcile the previously incompatible fields of science and the military arts and allay its Cold War anxieties. Eaton retains the traditional male-coded props and activities that define him as a Warrior Male—he can handle a gun, belt down a stiff drink, fight off a blonde floozy and her jealous husband, and uncover a "Red" conspiracy—but now he does so while spouting the importance of using representative data samples in order to make valid interpolations of public opinion. This innovative but pedestrian combination of soldier and scientist perhaps accounts for *The Fearmakers* obscurity. A run-of-the mill G.I. foot soldier who knows his way around spreadsheets and pie charts is not the most dashing of heroic figures nor will he assuage American Cold War worries. However, the nation's first jet aces—who combine their records of confirmed MiG kills over Korea with backgrounds in nuclear power, rocket propulsion, and astrophysics—will. By 1959 the nation comes to know these soldier-scientist amalgams as astronauts.

In many Cold War contexts, the figure of the astronaut is a composite of previous male role models that had been successful in the past but were now beginning to lose their efficacy and appeal. Part soldier, part scientist, and part family man, the astronaut is at once a member of the uniformed services whose actions are not tainted by the stalemate legacy of Korea nor restricted by the dangers of atomic war. He is a steady, sober, church-going husband and father who is part of yet not constrained by his American domicile. Moreover, he is a technician versed in mathematics, physics, and

astronomy but whose behavior is not bound by the perceived, stereotypically cold, emotionless rationality of the clinical scientist. Above all, the new role model that would embody a perceived national identity and personify Democracy's continued Cold War struggle against Communism is one of the good old boys: white, male, and heterosexual.

Demonstrating the desire for such a savior in a space suit, a plethora of books about nuclear science, space exploration, and rocketry written specifically for children—by both children's authors and noted scientists—deluged American homes and schools during the early Cold War. Encouraged by the establishment of the National Science Foundation in 1950, by President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" initiative of 1953, by interest in the International Geophysical Year (which was actually an eighteen-month long event that began on July 1, 1957), and by the creation of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, many authors sought to fill a vacancy in the canon of scientific texts for young children. They produced a unique type of book written specifically for school children that introduces elementary and middle-school children to the basics of physical sciences involved in space flight, inculcates a national identity grounded in competition with Russia during the space race, and—sometimes overtly and sometimes on a subliminal level—reinforces the notion of white, male social dominance in America.

These texts were not only written specifically for the primary school child but marketed with them in mind as well. For instance, in 1959 the wife and husband team of Mae and Ira Freeman published *You Will Go to the Moon* as an "I Can Read It All By Myself Beginner Book" published by Random House, part of the hugely successful Dr.

Seuss series of juvenile texts. The book's size, binding, and design lends itself to be purchased and shelved right alongside *Cat and the Hat* and *Horton Hears a Who*, so that as American youths learn to read they would eventually reach for *You Will Go to the Moon* and then, perhaps, to the moon itself. Similarly, in 1957 and 58, German scientist Willy Ley wrote an "Adventures in Space" series sponsored by General Mills. As these books were priced at only one dollar per volume, it is easy to imagine children begging their mothers to buy the next installment of this four-book series as they piled Betty Crocker cake mixes and boxes of Cheerios and Kix into their suburban supermarket shopping carts. But along with their daily-recommended allowances of vitamins and minerals, Cold War children were also being offered a vision of a retooled masculinity thought to sustain America during the Cold War.

This new model of masculinity is indeed a constructed persona, having been designed on the drawing boards at NASA as if it were another piece of space hardware. In December of 1958, NASA had compiled a six-page list of qualifications and characteristics it deemed necessary in an astronaut. The candidates needed at least 1,500 hours flying time as pilots, a bachelor's degree in engineering or science, be less than forty years old and no more than five feet, eleven inches tall due to the cramped size of the space capsule. President Eisenhower reviewed NASA's list of requirements for Research Astronaut-Candidates, bristled at the recommendation that astronauts be paid at the GS-12 to GS-15 level ($8,330-$12,770 per year), and quickly told NASA to select their astronauts from the ranks of active duty military test pilots. "We've got plenty to choose from and they're already on the payroll," Eisenhower reasoned (qtd. in Schefter 52). Thus, Ike determined early on that only military test pilots need apply to the

astronaut program, thereby excluding civilian scientists, women, and many minorities. Though viewed by many as merely a cost-cutting measure, the decision to restrict astronaut recruitment to military men almost certainly had as an underlying ideological reason the desire to reconcile masculine Cold War anxieties. As Lisa Parks points out in her article "Bringing *Barbarella* Down to Earth," an unspoken function of the space race was to reassert male social authority over women, as "dominant public discourses of the period showed a profound mistrust of the physicality of the feminine body and sought to keep women 'safe and secure' on American soil rather than to launch them into the dangerous domain of outer space" (253). Such remasculinization of American society through the Mercury Project is evident in NASA's policies as well as in the children's space literature examined here.

On 9 April 1959, NASA presented to the public at a Washington D.C. press conference the men who would lead the United States into the new arena of space: Project Mercury astronauts Scott Carpenter, Gordon Cooper, John Glenn, Gus Grissom, Wally Schirra, Alan Shepard, and Deke Slayton. Promoted by NASA in the popular press as "the personification of the clean-cut, all-American boys . . . brave, God-fearing, patriotic individuals with loving wives and children" (McCurdy 90), their idealized and sanitized biographies, which emphasized their military exploits, filled many volumes of Cold War children's literature.

For example, in Erik Bergaust's book *First Men in Space* (1960), an appendix offers children detailed biographies of the original Mercury astronauts that focus on their military service records (40-6). Bergaust points out that during the Korean War, Scott Carpenter served in an anti-submarine patrol, "Gus" Grissom flew one hundred combat

missions in an F-86 jet fighter, and Wally Schirra flew ninety missions in an F-84E and had one confirmed and one probable MiG kill. Alan Shepard served aboard a destroyer during World War II before attending flight school, and "Deke" Slayton flew fifty-six bombing missions over Germany and seven over Japan. Though Gordon Cooper never actually flew in combat, Bergaust mentions that he did serve in the Marines, Army, and the Air Force at various times in his career. Bergaust also details that John Glenn, the unofficial star of the Mercury program, flew fifty-nine combat missions in an F4U fighter during World War II and ninety missions over Korea—downing three MiGs just one week before the cease-fire went into effect in 1953. Bergaust and many other writers, even in texts intended for school-aged children, seldom fail to mention the military aspects of the space race, even to the level of toting up "kills" attributed to each astronaut back in the "good ole' days" when "men were men" and settled conflicts by simply shooting their foes on the traditional stage of the conventional battlefield.

Similarly, in Gene Gurney's *Americans into Orbit*, the author devotes an entire chapter to enumerating the Mercury astronauts' military achievements (85-95), while only a paragraph to mentioning that while undergoing astronaut training, the Mercury Seven also attend "school" and are given "homework" in order to have "a good working knowledge of the basic sciences" (97-8). Should an astronaut lack combat experience, Gurney instead points out other male-coded attributes and activities that serve as substitutes. Gordon Cooper, whom he describes as having "blue eyes and close-cropped brown hair and a lean appearance" and being "fond of outdoor sports, especially riding, hunting, and fishing" (87), closely corresponds to Marsden's description of the Western

film's "Sagebrush Savior," who not only saves the community from danger but also re-establishes the Warrior Male's social position.

However, it is evident that Warrior Male qualifications took paramount importance over scientific education in the astronaut selection process. In fact, Scott Carpenter twice failed to obtain a Bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado and John Glenn had dropped out to college in 1942 to join the Marines (Schefter 71). Though the educational requirements for admittance into the Mercury Program were stringent, they could easily be waived if the applicant exhibited true Warrior Male qualities and had an acceptable wartime combat record.

Additionally, many of these books outline in very specific terms the physical qualifications then deemed necessary to be a "space man," with women intentionally excluded except in a few extraordinary cases. For instance in *The Real Book About Space Travel* (1952), Hal Goodwin writes that "being a spaceman will call for a rare combination of good physical condition, good education and excellent brains. Spacemen will be 'the Chosen,' the pick of the young men" and that "each man will have to be a specialist or he won't be worth carrying to space" (67). Willy Ley, in his 1957 book *Space Pilots*, also looks for a perfect male physical specimen to fill the anticipated space capsule. He tells his young readers that the "young man" eligible for astronaut training will be "about 18 years old . . . his IQ must be 125 or higher and he must be interested in space travel. He must not stand taller than about 5 feet 10 inches, but he may be a short as 5 feet 2 inches." Ley adds that the aspiring male candidate must "not be inclined to be chubby. He must have 20/20 vision . . . and he must be physically sound" (16). Similarly, in *Across the Space Frontier* Dr. Heinz Haber says that "in selecting space

aspirants we will do well to look to the campus gymnasium for champions in diving and pole-vaulting, for they have experience in handling their bodies in a weightless condition" (97). The focus on physical perfection in such texts creates an image of masculine idealism, though at the same time excludes many otherwise qualified astronaut candidates simply because their genetics made them a certain height or weight, or doomed them to wearing corrective lenses.

Though never actually mentioning race, such discrimination based upon physicality is chillingly close to the rhetoric used in Nazi Germany to define the Aryan ideal. Yet while subconsciously exhibiting the sexism and racism that was all too common in those days, these authors were neither rabid white supremacists nor Nazis. In fact, Ley had fled Germany in 1935, two years after the National Socialist Workers' Party took control of that country and during a time when many of his fellow scientists—members of the German Rocket Society including Wernher von Braun—were working at the German V-1 and V-2 rocket facility at Peenemünde. However, the choice of masculine pronouns and references to "men" as space travelers are specific, intentional references to the male gender and not inclusive of women. In *Space Pilots* (1957), Ley says that "the captain calls everybody Jim or Bob or Hank and he is called Joe in turn" (28). Again, without addressing gender specifically, Ley's choices of Anglo-Saxon, male names when making his speculation about cockpit banter reveals his bias towards selecting an all-male crew. Because of such semantics, these texts exhibit the nearly universal tendency of that period to privilege white males as the logical—if not only—candidates to become astronauts.

The authors of these children's books were not unique in demonstrating a bias for white males as scientist or astronaut candidates. Such privileging is evident in other aspects of Cold War American society. In an advertisement in the 13 April 1959 issue of *Life* magazine, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's full page message asks "Can your child afford not to have a college education?" (24). Though the language in the text is gender neutral, using terms like "child" and "children," the illustration is decidedly pro-male. A male professor (a Ward Cleaver look-alike) earnestly leans over a table upon which he displays a globe and a model rocket. The blackboard behind him displays the Earth and Moon, with orbits of satellites or spacecraft chalked between them. Listening with rapt attention in their ties, cardigan sweaters, and argyle socks are eight young college students: all white, all male. Here, as in the texts written for younger children, the prevailing assumption is that future astronauts will have advanced education in the hard sciences and that the vast majority of those holding such credentials will be white males.

Interestingly, though not a few of these texts were written or illustrated by women, they are overwhelmingly biased in that they nearly always depict boys and men as space explorers. Girls and boys sometimes learn about science side-by-side, but seldom do the girls actually get into space. This may seem puzzling to a contemporary reader, as Peter Hunt points out in *Children's Literature*, that "the vast majority of editorial staff working in publishing for children are women . . . there are and have been rather more female writers than male writers for children" and that "primary-school teaching is predominantly a female profession" (278). Due to the predominance of women in this segment of publishing and education, it would be logical to expect to find

more depictions of female astronauts in these texts. However, the consensus of what constituted American national identity during the Cold War was firmly established as being almost exclusively heterosexual, Anglo, and male: reiterating the prerequisites for inclusions into the warrior ranks as well as for being an astronaut in the future.

There are a few notable exceptions to the "no girls allowed" rule of astronaut selection, however. In *Your Trip Into Space* (1953), author Lynn Poole tells his readers that should they be so inclined to be space explorers, hundreds of "personal questions must be answered by all young men and young women who apply for a job on the rocket" (68-9). His inclusion of women into the then hypothetical pool of potential astronauts is evidently an anomaly, since he continues by saying:

> Don't be surprised by the reference to 'young women,' for there is a strong possibility that women may be members of the crew. For many years, medical scientists and research psychologists have been studying the strength of women. Published articles on the subject indicate that in many ways women are stronger than men and remain calmer under stress. Today we feel certain that women will go along on trips into space. You young women need not feel left out, if you have the qualifications necessary. (69)

Of course, his inclusion of women in the space program rings hollow with his last caveat. If denied the opportunity to obtain the "qualifications necessary" as Navy or Air Force fighter or bomber pilots in the Warrior Males' arena of war, then women are indeed very much left out. If the Commander in Chief decrees that all astronauts be military test pilots, and if women could not be military test pilots, then it is impossible for women to become astronauts. Even as Poole himself hints at the possibility of opening space capsule doors to all genders, he also prepares both girls and boys for rejection, reminding them that during the Second World War II, thousands of men "who wanted to be pilots, navigators, engineers, or bombardiers on air crews" underwent a

battery of examinations (70). He tells us that "each candidate was put through physical and mental tests of learning abilities, physical coordination, emotional stability, ability to get along with other people," and that the tests for space rocket crews will be even more rigorous (70). With such stringent requirements to meet, Poole cautions that, "like many cadet applicants in World War II, you must be prepared for bad news. You may be turned down" (72). Poole is nearly unique in his inclusion of women in the fledgling astronaut program, but his warnings of almost certain failure certainly must have spread a quenching effect over any aspirations of space travel that most young girls—and no doubt not a few boys—reading his text might have had.

The notion of women in space was not confined to children's books, as Project Mercury did briefly consider selecting some women as astronaut candidates. The Lovelace Foundation for Medical Research in Albuquerque, New Mexico conducted a secret program to identify and test women candidates for the space program in 1960. One of the candidates—Geraldyn Cobb—due to her exemplary physical condition and her impressive flying experience which included setting world aviation records, qualified to be a Mercury astronaut by passing all tests—both physical and mental—with flying colors. Encouraged by her success, the Lovelace Foundation eagerly accepted twelve additional women candidates, put them and Cobb through even more tests, and publicly announced that American women were ready to fly into space.

However, due to intense pressure from NASA to keep the astronauts' locker room all male, and using Eisenhower's earlier dictum that astronauts be military test pilots as its rationale, the entire Lovelace program was canceled in July of 1961 (McCurdy 221-6). To some, President Eisenhower's intent to save taxpayers money and

recruit only military men into the Mercury program was merely an excuse to discriminate along gender lines. As Lisa Parks puts it, what NASA "really feared was that a dangerously irreverent and uncontainable feminine body might complicate scientific rational and national imperatives to conquer the unknown domain of outer space" (271). Furthermore, Parks points out, "not only would the female astronaut introduce sexual difference [and tension and temptation!] into the spacecraft, she was imagined to be too preoccupied with her own body to observe space 'objectively' for science and claim it for the nation" (271). The era was replete with sexist jokes about space helmets ruining women's hairdos, about weightlessness lifting their skirts above their heads, and about the perceived pleasures and perils of zero-gravity sexual intercourse. With such gender bias rampant in 1950s America, there is little wonder why decades would pass before such gender-based nonsense would begin to disappear from the space program or the nation.

The *de facto* requirement that astronauts be military members also helped reestablish the Warrior Male as dominant in American society. With over 15 million ex-servicemen—from both World War II and Korea—eligible for G.I. Bill of Rights college tuition assistance in the 1950s, candidates for the space program selected from the nation's universities were likely to be veterans as well. Ley, in *Space Pilots*, emphasizes the desirability of using veterans—or at least those well-versed in warfare—as astronauts. He maintains that in addition to knowing astronomy, the "future space pilot must also study ballistics—the science of shooting—and he must be capable of working out the trajectory of a ballistic missile with accuracy" (17). When discussing the threat of space capsules being struck by meteorites, he says that "flying a ship through space

must be about as dangerous as maneuvering a tank through an artillery barrage" (36). Who better, then, could the nation trust with its multi-million-dollar spaceships than the same men to whom it had already entrusted its ships, tanks, and planes? Among the scores of other books he wrote, Ley had penned two wartime volumes entitled *Bombs and Bombing* (1941) and *Shells and Shooting* (1942). Thus it is not surprising that his rhetoric would have such a military tone. What is germane here, though, is the fact that those people most familiar with ballistics, with tanks and artillery, with bombs and shells, would have been nearly exclusively male. Thus, according to Ley, the "chosen" astronaut candidates were to be not only males, but Warrior Males.

Extended discussions of possible space weaponry also lend credence to the idea that combat in space was a very real possibility and so only Warrior Males were fit candidates for the space program. In the introduction to *Across the Space Frontier* (1952), Cornelius Ryan, an associate editor for *Collier's*, expresses a Cold War fear that reached near-hysteria levels after the launch of Sputnik five years later:

> Therefore this book is an urgent warning that the United States should immediately embark on a long range development program to secure for the West 'space superiority,' since a ruthless power established on a space station could actually subjugate the peoples of the world. Sweeping around the earth in fixed orbit like a second moon, this man-made island in the heavens could be used as a platform from which to launch guided missiles. Radar-controlled projectiles armed with atomic war heads could be fired at any target on the earth's surface with devastating accuracy, and because of their enormous speeds and relatively small size, it would be almost impossible to intercept such missiles. In other words: whoever is first to build a station in space can prevent any other nation from doing so. (xiii)

Here, Ryan once again points out the dangers inherent in a world where science and technology have the power to render impotent the tanks, cannons, ships, and planes

that—until 1945—had enabled Warrior Male to maintain a special place for himself at the head of the social hierarchy.

However, Ryan goes on to say that science could indeed be made to serve the Warrior Male in his struggle against obsolescence. Reminding us of the qualities that formed our national identity during the first part of the twentieth century, he tells us that in the United States, "we have the scientists and the engineers. We have the inventive genius. We have the vast industrial superiority" to take the lead in the space race and build the first observation station to orbit the Earth (xiv). In doing so, Warrior Male could then guarantee that "no nation could undertake preparations for war without the certain knowledge that its massing troops were being observed by the ever-watching eyes aboard the 'sentinel in space.' It would be the end of Iron Curtains wherever they might be" (xiv). Besides guaranteeing early warning for deployment of conventional, terrestrial military forces, the space race would also guarantee the continued necessity of the Warrior Male—both in space and on Earth—during the second half of the century and well into the foreseeable future.

Ryan envisioned space stations as adjunct tools for waging terrestrial wars, but other children's Cold War space literature did not ignore the possibility of armed conflict in outer space. In Hal Goodwin's *The Real Book About Space Travel*, for example, the author seems to initially dismiss the concept of arming our astronauts, saying that "it is hard to imagine why a spaceman would need a weapon," and pointing out that "in space, any earth weapon would be dangerous" due to Newton's Third Law which describes the violent reaction that an astronaut would experience should he fire a conventional rifle or pistol while in outer space (62). However, Goodwin goes on to say that arms might be

needed if astronauts had to "explore some sky world where dangerous creatures lived" (62). He then speculates on the best sort of weapon to develop for space use, including ultrasonic guns, heat rays, "atomic pistols," proton guns, and guided missiles (62-7). Though playing upon fears most immediately associated with the science-fiction trope of alien invasion from outer space, the weapons Goodwin describes could also be used against a different sort of "dangerous creature" not actually named in this text: a Soviet cosmonaut. Thus, science could be made to serve the Warrior Male not only with new modes of transportation but also with new weapons. If Warrior Male found his Jeep and M-1 rifle to be as antique as the horse and six-gun due to technology's Atomic Age advances, then the space program, children learn from these texts, offers rationalization and opportunities for scientists to invent new weapons that Warrior Male could use in the new frontier of space. If Colt and Winchester, Browning and Garrand used their talents to supply the Western hero and the World War II G.I. with weapons for their generations' battles, then von Braun and Oppenheimer could and should devise arms for the Mercury astronauts, further solidifying the relevance of Warrior Males in space.

Besides books, other literature written for children during the Cold War exhibit the then-accepted notion that space would be not only the final frontier but also the final battleground. As Marc Richards tells us in an October 1998 article in *Monthly Review*, even the ubiquitous public school newsletters *My Weekly Reader* and *Current Events* began to rally support for the United States to construct armed space stations as early as 1949, reporting that the military was planning to construct an orbiting base 25,000 miles into space from which to shoot rockets at the nation's enemies. Additionally, those same schoolchild-oriented newspapers report President Eisenhower's call for sacrifices from

the American public and especially from American school children who, as part of the national effort to catch-up to and surpass the Soviet Union in space technology, were expected in the post-Sputnik world to forego pursuits of the liberal arts for the more utilitarian studies of the physical sciences (33+).

Other authors exhibit similar desires for the militarization and masculinization of space, but on subtler levels. For instance, in Mae and Ira Freeman's popular book *You Will Go to the Moon* (1959), the illustrations depict a decidedly all-male crew, as indicated by their apparel which closely resembles military uniforms without the usual badges and insignia. Add to this the male-coded activities the space travelers engage in—sliding down fireman's poles, watching cowboy films and baseball games, and playing chess—and the bias for an exclusively male crew is evident. Likewise, In Werner von Braun's 1958 *First Men to the Moon*, the fictionalized narrative of the United States' first moon shot is told through the characters of John Mason and Larry Carter, rugged he-men who, though not necessarily military, are firmly established as members of the Warrior Male group, with wives and children left behind at home just as they would be if the men were soldiers campaigning overseas instead of in space.

That these children's texts make note of the fact that the ideal candidates for space travel are family men also indicates a concern over maintaining some degree of domesticity among these new heroes, though such texts continue to exclude women. In Charles Coombs' *Project Mercury* (1960), he tells the children reading his book:

> Seven men have been trained as Project Mercury Astronauts. All are military test pilots. All are in their thirties and are in the very best of health. Three are Air Force pilots. Three are Navy pilots. One is a Marine pilot. All seven are very well educated, intelligent, and eager men. All are married and have families of their own. (26)

Here, Coombs emphasizes that this homogeneous band of astronauts not only fulfills the unwritten requirements of being middle-class, white, and male, but heterosexual as well. Rather than being exceptional in their achievements or potential, the Mercury astronauts are actually remarkable for their homogeneity, for their participation in the middle-class, suburban model of Cold War domesticity with the devoted wife confined to the domicile minding the loving children while "dad" escapes the confines of the home even as he escapes the Earth's atmosphere to find his occupation in the external sphere of activity with other men. The only difference between NASA's John Glenn and television's Ward Cleaver is the distance of their commutes.

Perhaps taking a cue from the all-male domestic groups found in the Strategic Air Command bomber crews of the Cold War, many children's authors envision space ships and space stations manned entirely by Warrior Males, though they often engage in feminine-coded activities. Most prevalent are depictions of men preparing and serving food while in space. In children's space texts, one of the most exhaustively explained aspects of space travel is how to cook and eat while in zero-gravity—a topic that evidently fascinated children as much in the 1950s as it does today. Such inclusions of domestic activities in the Warrior Male sphere of activity at first seem to detract from the Warrior Male ethos, but upon closer examination they appear to be more examples of science serving man, of demonstrating that women are not necessary in space, and of providing a means to introduce gradually the notion of space travel to the next generation of masculine children.

For instance, in Jeanne Bendick's *The First Book of Space Travel* (1953), her comic illustration of a man dressed in stereotypical domestic chef's garb—white apron

and white puffy chef's hat—contrasts with the nearby man dressed in stylized military fatigues (34). The domestic, feminine-coded chef discovers to his dismay that his conventional peas and carrots float out of his conventional saucepan, while the Warrior Male contentedly eats his processed space food out of a squeeze-bottle. In space, scientific, masculine methods of consumption are depicted as being superior to domestic, feminine methods. Likewise, in Hal Goodwin's *The Real Book About Space Travel* (1952), illustrated by Clifford Geary, we read that astronauts should not expect fried eggs for breakfast, as "the tiny explosions of bacon grease in the frying pan would send the egg flying. It would be terrible if the captain walked into a nice, soft yolk. Better have boiled eggs, cooked under pressure" (43). Additionally, the text that tells young astronauts that they will drink coffee "out of a plastic baby bottle, squeezing the liquid into your mouth" (43), is accompanied by a depiction of a confident Warrior Male in jumpsuit and boots "drinking coffee through a straw" as office supplies and dishes float around him (44). Though the man in the drawing actually looks more like he is blowing glass rather than drinking coffee, such depictions of weightless dining and drinking no doubt entertained children of the 1950s while simultaneously enlightening them to some of the complications of space travel. Above all, such texts reassured children that space travel would not be entirely unfamiliar. In fact, the "baby bottle" eating and drinking containers even allow for space technology to provide a sort of wet nurse service for male space travelers, providing them not only with their mothers' nourishing home cooking, but her comforting breast as well.

Lynn Poole also chose Geary as illustrator for *Your Trip Into Space* (1953), though in this instance they seem to have gotten the science of weightless food

preparation wrong. In the text, Poole accurately explains the need to make space provisions as light as possible and anticipates the use of microwave ovens in space craft, but the accompanying illustration shows one man serving another a cup of coffee poured out of a regular coffee pot as they stand in front of a very conventional kitchen range with ordinary pots and pans hanging from hooks on the wall (156). The only visual clue that they are not inside some Earth-bound suburban ranch house is the submarine-style hatch that hints that this kitchen is located on a vessel of some sort rather than a stationary dwelling. Similarly, Margaret O. Hyde, in her 1959 *Off Into Space!*, allows illustrator Bernice Myers to depict a space station's male chef frying a whole fresh fish in conventional cookware on what appears to be a coal- or wood-fired stove (34). Perhaps these authors and illustrators were depicting life in simulated gravity, which would allow for more conventional cuisine, or perhaps they were adding a touch of the familiar to what would otherwise be a very alien and frightening idea for young readers. Separation from home is always unsettling for youngsters, even if the journey is only to their grandparents' house. Strange food makes the situation worse. So rather than disparaging such children's authors for their inaccuracies, we should instead applaud them for their subtle, shrewd methods of gradually introducing children to life in outer space, hinting that the security of the American middle-class domesticity—in these illustrations portrayed by a kitchen remarkably similar to their mothers'—would follow and comfort them even as they ventured to the moon. Thus we see that Cold War Male Warrior ethos, exercised in the space race as it is among SAC bomber crews, excludes women from actual participation in the masculine domain though it never hesitates to co-

opt the feminine-coded domestic activities, props, and traits it deems necessary for successful masculine performance.

So, as presented in children's texts published during the Cold War, the figure of the Mercury Project astronaut serves to reestablish Warrior Male authority in American culture as it reserves the final frontier of space as an exclusively masculine domain. Additionally, the space project and its associated cult of astronaut hero-worship were techniques of preserving a version of national identity that privileges the straight, white, Protestant male as socially superior due to his traditional role of warrior. The way for Warrior Male to retain his hegemony in American society, it seems, was a re-emphasis on transmitting a consensually agreed upon set of national values to the next generation that would preserve white, Anglo, heterosexual men as the "rightful" leaders of the community. Combining the traditional characteristics of armed warriors with the modern abilities of the scientist, and including aspects of American domestic life in spite of its feminine-coding, the American astronaut figure personified—though usually more in fiction than in fact—a national identity that would solve the many and varied perceived crises of modern masculinity.

Nowadays, there are many valid questions as to what constitutes American national identity, or if such a unitary thing exists at all or ever did. It was a different matter in the 1950s, however. Then, there existed a consensus that American national identity derived from an unbroken line of Anglo-European "great men," historical figures who performed great deeds in the name of God, Democracy, and Capitalism. From Christopher Columbus to George Washington to Abraham Lincoln to the current president, American children learned the nation's history as a series of biographies of

white male explorers, soldiers, and politicians. Those who questioned this consensus model of "America" were very much in the minority, and often persecuted as minions of Communism, homosexuality, or atheism by government-sponsored campaigns and by interest groups that were little better than lynch mobs. However, as nuclear weapons all but precluded the possibility of a large-scale conventional war, the next best opportunity for American Warrior Males to add their names to the roles of the "great men" would be in the space race, an arena that reconciles science with warfare while restricting participation to men. In so doing, the Mercury Program also helped perpetuate the version of national identity espoused in movie Westerns, centered on the solitary masculine hero who delivers the community from external dangers through his ability to wield phallic weaponry when women and lesser men cannot, though in doing so removed the hero from the saddle and ensconced him in the space suit.

Quite in accord with the attributes of the "Sagebrush Savior" of the post-war Western is the Mercury astronaut, who personifies a paternalistic national identity that many hoped would guide American society through the dark days of the Cold War. Kathy Scales Vandell itemizes the facets of American national identity that many held as a consensus during this period. These include the virtues of "honesty, industry, loyalty, bravery, perseverance, sacrifice, and a concept of duty to a relatively homogeneous community." Additionally, Cold War American national identity calls for obedience to elected or appointed leaders and "the capacity to execute purposeful, public, challenging and, on occasion, violent action and the ability to limit or control violence at all other times" (433). Vandell points out that though notions of a more pluralistic national identity—one that includes people of color and women and recognizes the fact that

American history is not complete without acknowledging the contributions of non-Anglo, non-heterosexual women and men—emerges during and after World War II, such pluralism was usually contained by "calls to unity in the face of the war and the postwar tensions between the superpowers" (445). The American virtues first reflected in the traditional stories of the colonists, explorers, and pioneers (who were almost all Warrior Males) are also evident in the new American heroic model of the astronaut as he emerges from the battlefields of World War II and Korea. Regardless of whether the archetypal American warrior hero wore a ten-gallon hat, steel pot, or space helmet, he continues to be male until well into the 1970s, when the nation finally reaches such milestones as the United States Military Academy admitting women into its program at West Point and NASA finally admitting women into its space shuttle training program, putting to rest the perception of the social superiority of the Warrior Male ethos.

So as this dissertation shows, the role of the Warrior Male and its associated masculine military ethos during the early Cold War is inherently complex and further complicated by a host of external geopolitical, technological, and social forces that seem to conspire to topple him from his traditional place at the head of the public hierarchy. Paramount is the trend towards domestication of the Warrior Male, a process that involves replacement of public-sphere activities with those centered on the family and domicile. Though the typical Second World War veteran experiences a tremendous sense of accomplishment in defeating the Axis powers in 1945 and ostensibly anticipates peaceful cultivation of his new domestic roles, the creation of atomic weapons in that conflict also creates feelings of impotency and the idea that his traditional battlefield prowess is now inconsequential. Coupled with the rising demand for social and

economic equality for women, the value of and desire for the old model of a male-dominated culture begins to wane. As the Korean War further demonstrates the inadequacies of the conventional warrior in the Atomic Age, many felt the need to publicly confess their feelings of ineptitude and disassociation with the masculine-coded role of head of the nuclear family, and to present those confessions through a new type of poetry. Though attempts are made to reorganize specialized Warrior Male groups into surrogate family units that allow for both the cultivation of domestic undertakings while satisfying the need to retain vestiges of the warrior ethos—such as depicted in the Strategic Air Command genre of films for the Cold War—those attempts ultimately prove inadequate. Popular culture of the 1950s, as illustrated in the science fiction "B" movies of the period, further reflects the sense of Warrior Male anxiety prevalent in a world where nuclear weapons and intercontinental bombers and missiles empower military forces to a degree never before seen in history while at the same time reducing them to inaction. Finally, in a project that creates a male role model who has more in common with the nineteenth-century iconic hero found in the American Western film than in contemporary society, the Mercury Astronaut, as illustrated in children's nonfiction space literature of the 1950s, is an attempt to reconcile the warrior ethos with technology. At least when viewed through the texts presented here, it becomes clear that the Cold War was not only a struggle between the Democratic West and the Communist Bloc, but also a struggle to preserve an ancient, masculine warrior ethos that was irrelevant in the modern world.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel John J. Smith, originally from Lima, Ohio, enlisted in the United States Army as a private soldier in 1982. Commissioned an officer in the Field Artillery through the Army's Officer Candidate School, he has served for the past twenty years in various assignments in the United States and overseas, including command of a Field Artillery battery during the Persian Gulf War. He is a graduate of the Combined Arms and Services Staff School, the Command and General Staff Officers Course, and the Defense Language Institute. He is now stationed at West Point, New York, where he is an Associate Professor of English at the United States Military Academy. Lieutenant Colonel Smith holds a bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature from Ohio Northern University and a master's degree in English from Texas A & M University.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Marsha C. Bryant, Chair
Associate Professor of English

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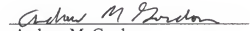

Andrew M. Gordon
Associate Professor of English

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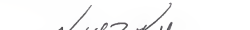

Kenneth B. Kidd
Assistant Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Brian E. Ward
Associate Professor of History

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 2002

Dean, Graduate School